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A WEEKLY FOR WINTER NIGHTS AND SUMMER DAYS.

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No. 263.

AFTER THREE YEARS.

BY FRANK H. CONVERSE.

"Did I? I declare I'd forgotten. It was such a long time ago. How easy one's memory shortens. The older and wiser they grow. One always says silly things sometime. In the freshness and bloom of one's youth. And I dare say there might have been one time— When I thought I was telling the truth. Not married? Why, Charlie, how funny! It's time that you were, do you know? You're young yet, with plenty of money— Oh, please! don't begin to talk so. Of course you will marry—what speeches! For a man of your years, I must laugh; Let me see—I believe your age reaches About twenty-eight years and a half. Will I dance? yes, thank you, most certain! Why not? Only, Charlie, take care. Or people will say we are flirting. And now that I'm—that is not fair! You oughtn't to rise to have taken. It's really not proper, because Since I have been—no, you're mistaken. You must wait for the music to pause."

"And so you've been traveling. How long? Ah, yes—I remember, three years; But merely, don't put such a scowl on; No more—I don't like *La Zola*. They play it so fast, and I'm dizzy. Now please do not take me to task. That gentleman was talking to me, was he? Yes, I know him, pray why did you ask? Is it possible, Charlie, that no one Has told you, that two years ago—I was—is it you, Mr. Archer, I owe one?— I really shall have to say 'no'— For, with waiting so swiftly with Charlie, And the heart really ready when Mr. Farley Is ready to drop. Mr. Farley, May I ask you—my husband to call?"

"Ah, here he comes!—yes, Mr. Jennings. I'm ready—but let me, my dear, Introduce my old friend, Charlie Glenning. We have not seen for three years. I knew you were waiting—I saw you. As patient a man as could be. I really had sympathy for you. But then you should dance, do you see? And now, if you'll please call the carriage, You wait here with Charlie, will you? And you knew not a word of my marriage! I thought so! I tried hard to tell you, but you were so busy. The carriage is ready!" all right! Call and see, please do, Mr. Glenning. At West Forty-seventh—Good-night!"

The Terrible Truth: OR, THE THORNHURST MYSTERY.

BY MRS. JENNIE DAVIS BURTON,
AUTHOR OF "STRANGELY WED," "THE FALSE WIDOW," "ADRIA, THE ADOPTED," "CORAL AND RUBY," ETC., ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER IV.
A LETTER AND A CHARGE.

The glory of a mid-August day lay upon the earth. Fields of late golden grain lay ready for the harvest waved in the sun. Olden vines brought his long, with toward the sky, and invited flocks of chattering, noisy birds by their wealth of scattered grains.

Nowhere was the splendor of that fervid summer month reflected more joyously than from the long reaches of Thornhurst. Never had the rich old estate given back a better yield; never had the orchards been more amply stocked with russet-cheeked, gold-striped fruit; never had the vineyard upon the hillside hung fuller of purpling, luscious clusters; never had the stipes of woodland flung out such green, bushy banners, the means of clambering vines, the dust, the wear and tear, are so apt to reflect in tarnished blotches upon nature's gala-dress. Thornhurst mansion had put on a different aspect under the waving foliage, the masses of clambering vines, the wide, smooth lawn, the mazes of shrubbery and flower-garden stretching at its sides. A substantial red brick structure with many windows, long, narrow windows overtopped by scrolls in white stone, with high, roomy chambers within, where all the brightness of sunshine, of glowing tints and rare adornments had been gathered to make perfect this well-kept home.

Thornhurst mansion had gone up in all its stately, not a quarter of a century before, when its master, Colonel Vivian, brought his bride to the old estate lying in one of the fertile valleys of Western Pennsylvania. He was forty-five and she was barely twenty. He was a tall, broad-shouldered and deep-chested, while she was a fair little creature, one of those fragile, clinging, affectionate women, helpless as the tenderest of flowers, meek to be so well-sheltered and well-cared for, never fit to cope with the ills and woes of the world's struggles.

For all this, the couple were no happier pair of lovers ever made of wedded life a lingering honeymoon. A brief honeymoon at the best. All peace and joy would sometimes prolong a life, but in this case they were never to be separated. For two brief years Alice Vivian was mistress of Thornhurst mansion and queen of her husband's heart; then she died, leaving another tiny life to grow into the void left behind.

That was twenty-one years before, and Vane Vivian now was just of age, the idol of his father, for all there was sometimes tempestuous scenes between them.

Seymour Vivian, hot-headed and passionate all his life-long, had grown irascible with advancing years. He had a great, generous heart within the white, towering frame that withstood time like some grand old oak grown rugged under the storms—a generous heart, but crusted in by obstinacy and long-indulged selfish opinion, until now he stood with his fanlike and his foibles, a hot-tempered, hasty old man, whose passions were like tropic storms, fierce and short-lived.

Something had gone amiss with him this bright August day.

Thunder was on his brow, lightning in his eyes, and an ominous stillness in his aspect, the calm before the storm. A quick, springy step approached, and Vane Vivian entered his father's presence, his smooth, dark, boyish face, handsome and glowing as it had been not many weeks since on the sandy stretches of Cape Cod. He tossed the dark hair back from his forehead, dropped into a chair, and began a tattoo with his fingers upon a table beside him.

"You sent for me, I believe, father?"

"I sent for you, Vane." The words coming from that enforced stillness of manner were like a distant, warning growl, but Vane appeared delightfully unconcerned, until now he stood with his fanlike and his foibles, a hot-tempered, hasty old man, whose passions were like tropic storms, fierce and short-lived.

He brought his title out of the Mexican war, where he served with marked bravery and distinction, but his soldierly bearing emanated from the strict discipline of West Point, long years before. He turned, stopped, and the storm burst in its fullest fury.

"Yes, I sent for you, you dog! By the Lord, but it may be close upon the last time that I shall send for



"Oh, go, go quick! my father is coming! Oh, do go, Owen!"

you, disobedient young scapegrace as you take pains to prove yourself. Do you see this, sirrah, and this, and this? Do you know what they are? Duns coming from all parts, debts of your contracting after the very handsome allowance I made you with the strict proviso that you were not to go into debt. Look at them! Gambling debts, betting losses, liquor bills, a score that would disgrace the most dissipated rascal and gambler in existence. By the high heavens, you do well to carry it all with a free hand, but we'll see if there's no check to such lavish indulgence."

Vane sat with his head resting back upon the chair, his dark, glowing face in bold relief against the crimson upholstery, looking indifferently at his father the very least concern in all these charges.

"Well!" he said, inquiringly, as the other paused.

"What! that you have to say, father? I promised to join Dare on an angling expedition this afternoon. High time it was off."

Colonel Vivian's righteous indignation was too intense for expression. He stamped across the floor once more, with a great effort swallowed his violence, turning a sterner angry face upon his son.

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"Rio Janeiro, June 20th, 1867.

"My dear old friend of younger and happier days, in this my need turn to you as the one person in the world to whom I can confide my request, to whom I can intrust a sacred charge."

"I am dying, Seymour, dying alone, with no more kindly face to watch me now, with no more kindly hand to close my eyes at last, than of the faithful native who has followed me in all my wanderings, these past ten years. Ah, well, let me not be ungrateful! There are few hearts so true as that of my good Kallig."

"You were kind enough once, when I was so happy as to render you some slight service, to urge upon me that I should stand in need of friendly aid, and be the return however great, that I should apply first of all to you. The time has come, Seymour, when that long-past promise is sweetest solace to a dying man. I have no more to say to you, but I must take leave of you now. My wife was always delicate, and failed constantly after our child was born, a little daughter, called for the mother—Lenore. At last, when the little one was scarcely two years old, my wife taking counsel from her physician's solemn assurances, and yielding to my own entreaties, consented to a separation from our child and accompanied me upon a voyage in the hope of being restored to health. It was the last hope and a vain one. Lenore died on the voyage out, and I never since have set foot within the limits of the States."

"I have wandered all over the world since that, cutting off all near and dear ties in the time went, and this is years now, since I have even heard from little Lenore. My heart reproaches me for my neglect. It is asking too much of you, my friend, to look after the welfare of my daughter? Will you be to her as the father she has never known—kind, nobler, more generous than I have ever been."

"I have little enough to leave her. My sole earthly possessions are my personal effects which shall go to her. I have a small estate in Brazil, but I have managed to put by some shares in diamond mines here in Brazil that have turned out all expense and no income, and a pension which I have not time to ask much, but I believe not more than you will cheerfully perform."

"Little Lenore was left nearly fourteen years ago with a couple named Alexander, I'd care to see. I was on the coast of Cape Cod, three miles north of Brewster. I am writing this at weary intervals as I sit propped up in my bed. Tell my little girl for me that she is latest in her father's thoughts. Heaven bless her and you, dearest and truest of friends, will be the last prayer of EDWIN CARTER."

"Poor Ned," he thought, regretfully. "Always a dreamer, always roving and unsettled, and much of the time a vagabond, he was always ready to start and set out in a sorrowful abstraction."

"Upon my word, father, it strikes me you are a trifle more earnest than the case demands. If it were reversed now and Thornhurst depended on my taking to Miss Montrose, you might be pardoned some tremors regarding the issue. If I ever find myself in imminent danger from that quarter, I promise to give you fair warning at the risk of dishonor after the most approved high-tragedy method. Just now it might be more to the purpose to give your lawyer instructions regarding the liabilities represented there. Luck took an odd turn, but it all comes into a man's lifetime, I daresay."

Vane rose lazily and snatched away as the colonel gave no sign of continuing the conversation.

"As well look for oranges on crab-trees as expect odd heads on young shoulders, I suppose," muttered Colonel Vivian, knitting his bushy brows together.

"Every young man must sow his wild oats, and the devil fly away with the harvest!"

A light of pride flashed into his eyes as he saw Vane a few moments later, cross the lawn and join his friend at the further extremity. Despite his variable, passionate moods, it was a fond father's heart beating in his bosom—a heart in which the handsome, dashing, reckless young fellow was cherished in a very wayward sort of blind idolatry. An idolatry which could overlook the grave faults brought to light and represented in those bills lying before him, but which would have been relentless in crushing itself and him at any intimation of the danger he almost feared, the danger of the misalliance of his son with the daughter of Walter Montrose. After all it was not so much the contemplation of such a misalliance as the possibility of certain late-formed plans of his own coming to naught.

He drew a letter from his pocket which he had perused more than once since its receipt, upon the previous day. A letter written in a scrawling, illegible hand on thin blue rustling paper, which he spread wide and read once more.

"I began to think the funny innocents were to go undisturbed to-day," he said, relieving Vane of a part of the tackle he had brought along. "You are late."

"Had a little breeze with the colonel," Vane remarked, composedly. "I expected something of the kind, and the gust wasn't by any means so bad as it might have been. I say, Dare, I came near getting into difficulty regarding the incomparable, black-eyed Montrose."

"Ah!" Dare was noncommittal and apparently uninterested there.

"He got wind of my call yesterday. I didn't tell more than half the truth in giving the object of it. I wouldn't be guilty of such a flagrant breach of confidence as to repeat that my curiosity was to see the strenuous who has the wits such a potent spell of enchantment about the conqueror. For my word, old fellow, if Miss Ferguson gets an inkling of this affair I won't give much for your remaining chances. They stop here—the Fergusons do—as they pass through sometime about the last of the month. It is undeniable, though one hates to say it about so much propriety, the fair Augusta is jealous as a Turk, and faith! I think I shouldn't like to be her maid when our high lady's temper is up. That affair of the little girl down on the coast nearly cooked your goose for you, and take my word for it this following so soon would certainly be successful in completing that very interesting culinary operation."

"I'm not sure that I should object in the least. Nothing but that necessity ever drove me to put my head in that noose, as you very well know, not so far but it may be gracefully withdrawn, I'm thankful to recollect. I couldn't see my way clear by any other means when I fell in with Miss Ferguson's rather evident expectations. The colonel's very generous offer has changed the phase of affairs since that. This prospect of doing the continent as traveling companion and useful attendant upon your august self gives me two whole years of grace yet, and who knows but the chance of a fortune with the favor of old nobility about it which may cost less dearly than Miss Ferguson's meager eighty thousand in hand."

"Dare, by Jove! And mean while is the lovely Montrose doomed to languish alone? I wonder what you will do when there are no more words left to conquer, Owen?"

"Some object Alexander, and— Is that the fishing-ground? 'Tis then for the next three hours, let us hope."

The shy, speckled beauties held an adverse league to the sky, to appear. They very decidedly declined to be lured by charmingly-natural flies, or squirming, disgusting grubs, such as Dare resorted to. He met the fishing party, and he engaged Isak Walton, strolled off, leaving his friend to grill under the August sun alone. However exemplary Dare's patience may have been with an eye-witness of his elbow, it wore away soon after the other's departure.

He shouldered his rod and sauntered down-stream, casting sharp glances on all sides of him as he went. He struck across the Thornhurst outlying fields presently, through a belt of cedars, to a narrow, solid gate set in a high, impenetrable hedge stretching beyond. It yielded to his hand and he stepped within, cautious still and hugging the shadow of the deep hedge. It was a gloomy, overgrown garden into which he had come, and at a distance through the matted masses of shrubbery and vines he could see the gleam of a white dress, the vague outline of an advancing form.

"The figure came straight on to the spot where he stood. A figure dim-like in its proportions, a face of the richest brunette type, olive complexion, pomegranate bloom, and wondrous dark eyes, lighting at sight of him."

He put out his hand with one word:

"Venetia!"

"Owen! Oh, you should not have come again. You all me with such dread and terror lest we should be discovered."

"Dread and terror with me by you, Venetia? Remember it needs but one word of permission from you to put an end to it. I am not afraid to face your stern, cruel father!"

"Not cruel, Owen—at least not cruel to me. But he might be, he would be, if he knew how I have disobeyed him. I fear most for you, Owen. He would kill you, I do believe."

"I can very well believe in his perfect willingness to do it, my own dear. But for the deed in fact, gentlemen don't nowadays plink their adversaries under the fifth rib, or set hired ruffians on the track to add another to the list of mysterious disappearances, and make game for the police corps."

"You don't know my father, Owen. You don't know how terrible he is when his anger is aroused." The girl shivered in the warm afternoon air, and cast a frightened glance toward the house half-concealed by the rank, neglected garden between.

"I know myself, Venetia. I know that no man on earth ever yet mastered me or thwarted me in any object; no man on earth ever shall, not even Walter Montrose—your father. Forget him for the time, my love; think only of me. I have told you what I will gladly relinquish for you, the woman I might marry

but could never love. I am going away, within another month, to be absent two long years. Venetia, can you refuse me the happiness I have pleaded for, for the brief time left us?"

The great, soft dark eyes were fixed steadily upon his face, so tenderly that Dare's own tender ones—tender eyes they had been before this—wavered and were averted for the moment, but she did not answer in words.

"Confound the innocence that will take no meaning but the straight one, bounded by a wedding-ring, out of such impassioned love-making as mine has been," he thought. "But, I love the bright siren all the more for it. I've never been thwarted in my life and I don't expect to be now, by a woman. Mine she must be, mine she shall be, by fair means if I can't get her by foul. But who would have expected so much prudence in that glowing type of tropical exuberance?"

Dare, whose cold heart had never throbbed out of time even in the heat of his most vivid flirtations, was desperately in earnest now. So desperately in earnest that he was willing to put all his future at stake for the sake of these coming weeks.

His eyes met hers again, pleading, eager, drawing an answering light from her very soul.

"Can you hesitate to choose between us, Venetia—your father and me? He would sell you like a slave to the highest bidder. He has set his mark high; he aspires to Thornhurst and the hand of its heir. If he falls there he will not lack other opportunities, held in reserve. Which will you be, Venetia—another man's slave, or my loved and loving wife?"

A richer glow swept into the rare dark face as she clasped her soft, thrilling hands upon his arm.

"Can you ask, Owen—can you doubt? Yours, yours before all the world beside. But not now, Owen—'biverting again, but not through any lack of trust in him—I would not dare to brave my father's anger now while his hopes are so firmly fixed."

He leaned forward and kissed her, and with that kiss put the seal of his possession upon this "rare and radiant" creature who had enthralled him.

"You need not, my own. You need not openly defy him until the time comes when I can openly claim and properly care for you. You know just how meager a lot mine promises to be, and with that willing to brave that for my sake, you who have been from your childhood impressed with the one aim—to marry rich."

"If you could know how I have hated the thought," she interrupted him, passionately. "If you could know how I have loathed myself, how I have felt myself debased by having that one aim kept alive before me! You never will know, Owen, but you must, you shall know what glory I take in trampling over the sniveling respect for myself in knowing you to be so poor a man."

And you will not deny me now, Venetia? You will be my wife now—at once? Think of these long two years! How can I endure to face all that time and think that the power of man might avail to part us. Marry me in secret, if you prefer it so—now, tonight. There is a train from the station here, at half-past nine; we can take that to the town, ten miles up the line, go to a clergyman there, return at midnight, and no one need be the wiser. Will you—tonight—my own?"

"Owen, go soon! And I cannot. Oh, go quick! my father is coming. Oh, do go, Owen!"

She pushed him from her in her right, but he caught her hands, holding them firmly.

"Will you, Venetia, tonight? Promise or I shall stay here and face him."

"To-morrow night, then; I would be missed tonight. Go now, before he turns this way."

With a close pressure of her hands in his, one kiss upon her lips, he released her and was gone in a second moment.

"I would move heaven and earth rather than lose her now," he thought, taking long strides through the fragrant cedarwood. Owen Dare would have moved heaven and earth, but his own destruction in accomplishing any aim on which he might set his selfish heart.

His mind was stirred by some other element than the thought of his own bliss at the distance of Thornhurst. He had won, but he had counted on that! He had won the radiant creature who had fired his slow blood in two short weeks as it had never been before, and so ordered the cautious selfishness of his entire life to the winds. And, having won, the difficulty of his own position obtruded itself, but he had no effort, no shyness, no intention. He stood committed, to a certain degree, to Miss Ferguson—not committed beyond recall, but bound in all honor to define his relation toward her by the proposal of marriage. He had been punctilious even in surface honor. He had been as nearly committed perhaps fifty times before, but never under exactly similar circumstances. In this case the result was expected, not by the lady only, but by the entire circle of their mutual friends; he had intended it himself, a little regretfully, up to this point, but he had been driven to it by necessity, as he expressed himself to Vane, and that eighty thousand in hand had presented itself as a last alternative.

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CHAPTER VI.
INTO THE DARKNESS.

DARE kept himself close, all of the following day, until the dressing-bell clashed its warning through the great house. The Ferguson had come during the morning. The party comprised, as leading spirit, the fair Augusta herself, as matron and chaperone a fair, timid little woman, with unvarying sweetness of disposition and not the slightest force of character, the wife of a captain who was Augusta's nominal guardian, though she had passed by seven full years the age when a guardian's care may be by his disposal. Besides, there were two young ladies, just blossoming into society—bustling, insipid young misses enough: a masculine Ferguson, not the cousin but another, one degree removed, marriageable, weak voiced, with a fair-colored mustache, which engrossed half his time, the thin fair features that characterized the family, who divided his languid devotion with charming impartiality between the two young debutantes. And the new addition since the young men left the coast, Mr. Sholto Norton Hayes.

The Ferguson were connected with the Vivians in about the same remote degree which linked them with Dare, and the chance in their plans bringing them to Thornhurst, but two weeks earlier than indicated by the original programme was due, chiefly to the leading spirit. After years of aimless and indifferent drifting, Augusta's aspirations were fixed. She had never married, for the simplest of all reasons—no eligible person had ever asked her to marry. The eighty thousand had drawn her numerous admirers, it is true. It had been no secret in these later years, that Miss Ferguson was a heiress, but Miss Ferguson had set her mark high, after her own peculiar views, and her frigid hauteur was unmelting toward the common crowd who flocked about her. Miss Ferguson had chosen a husband, and she wanted a husband, but she wanted a husband of elegant style, a fair share of good looks, and unlimited devotion. She had found her *beau ideal* in Dare. He had been very attentive during this season past, but he had fought shy of the import issue, and if Dare had been desperate Miss Ferguson was no less so in reference to the old Sir Sholto Norton Hayes. European sojourn was waited back to her, and in her haste she had followed him up, determined that this next week at Thornhurst should decide their fates. Mr. Sholto Norton Hayes had attached himself to the very nick of time to become a witness in the fall lady's hands. She who had never bent from her iceberg severity, unless indeed to Dare, now stooped to conquer. She smiled mild encouragement upon Mr. Hayes, and took him in her train, and swept said train off to Thornhurst. In greater haste than her own rather particularly, she had been willing to approve. But it was one of those great issues requiring great measures; for the only time in her life Miss Ferguson forfeited her regard for *les convenances* and proved herself equal to the occasion.

Dare rose himself to make his usual careful toilet, and went down, half an hour later, when a second, loudly-clanging bell cleft the brooding quiet. The quiet changed to a small buzz, in the four ladies made their appearance in a body, and the gentlemen following close, the whole party went in to dinner—fifteen, more or less, and the ladies were in the dining-hall since the last annual visit of the Ferguson to Thornhurst.

Colonel Vivian was a genial host, and there was no flagging of the general enjoyment as the various courses were discussed.

Long, slanting shadows crept in over the lawn, and the last of the sun-rays struck the windows and the windows and the walls of the stately mansion. Miss Ferguson and her young lady friends were grouped picturesquely in the drawing-room, the former silent, the latter animatedly discussing the relative merits of the two young gentlemen, Owen Dare and Owen Vivian, as the gentlemen themselves followed so speedily that in a few minutes the ladies were involved in the comparative attractions of wine and ladies. It must have reflected strongly to the favor of the latter.

Colonel Vivian alone lingered, and Sholto Hayes was detained in the drawing-room by Mrs. Ferguson. The other three passed out through the wide open windows, and in a moment after than design Miss Augusta found herself alone with Dare, with the lady stretching between them and other companions, strolling side by side at the edge of the fish-pond, which was one of Colonel Vivian's favorite haunts.

The sun was quite down now and the purple tints of twilight fast succeeding. The distant voices mingled with the faint rustling of leaves borne upon the breeze. Here was solitude, romantic, and here was the witching hour which is prone to delude. The fair Augusta's heart beat perceptibly faster, a faint contradiction to the calm, but Dare had once been told that she did not more heart than a statue. Had she maneuvered for it she could not have brought about a more auspicious combination of circumstances. The question would have been, whether the tag of the opportunity? She led the conversation with artful references to his own expected absence and her probable plans.

"Yes," he said, indolently suppressing a yawn, "two years do look rather long ahead. The voyage will be a bore, and doing the continent something tedious. I haven't a doubt. But to a mortal who has no aspirations for the future it's about one whether the months drag through here in the States, or in China, or Hindostan, to say nothing of the intervening localities. For my part I don't know that I'd give a penny for the difference."

Miss Ferguson was startled—shocked out of her cultivated serenity. This was rank heresy coming from Dare whose looks if not his speech had declared before now the absolute misery of existing out of her presence. Every man must have some aspiration. Certainly he, brilliant, and talented—with a confident glance—had some hope which he was cherishing?

Dare remained unblinking unconscious of the soft imputation. Was he blind, wilfully blind? Did he never intend to speak at all? A sullen glow of anger and injured pride rose up within the lone expectant, long-enduring breast. Under in the distance came Sholto Hayes, released from his unwelcome detention, rambling the gloomy grounds evidently in search of them. He would speak gladly enough on half the encouragement Dare would give. They were lost in the dense shadow from the line of elms stretching away at one side, but the first edge of the rising moon was just visible above the horizon, and very soon the lawn would be one solid of silver light. Dare's quick eye had detected the advancing figure.

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done the same at any previous period of these last two weeks.

He pleaded his cause in hesitating, ungraceful sentences, but with an earnestness of candor which appealed to Miss Ferguson's aggrieved heart.

"I was waiting to say this back at the coast," he said, in conclusion. "I made up my mind to have it over and know what to expect, and I've told you now, awkwardly enough, I'm afraid, but I'm only waiting to show you in fact that I mean all I've said about making you as good a husband as the most of men do make. I'll take it as a great honor if you can consent with. Besides, there were two young ladies, just blossoming into society—bustling, insipid young misses enough: a masculine Ferguson, not the cousin but another, one degree removed, marriageable, weak voiced, with a fair-colored mustache, which engrossed half his time, the thin fair features that characterized the family, who divided his languid devotion with charming impartiality between the two young debutantes. And the new addition since the young men left the coast, Mr. Sholto Norton Hayes."

The Ferguson were connected with the Vivians in about the same remote degree which linked them with Dare, and the chance in their plans bringing them to Thornhurst, but two weeks earlier than indicated by the original programme was due, chiefly to the leading spirit. After years of aimless and indifferent drifting, Augusta's aspirations were fixed. She had never married, for the simplest of all reasons—no eligible person had ever asked her to marry. The eighty thousand had drawn her numerous admirers, it is true. It had been no secret in these later years, that Miss Ferguson was a heiress, but Miss Ferguson had set her mark high, after her own peculiar views, and her frigid hauteur was unmelting toward the common crowd who flocked about her. Miss Ferguson had chosen a husband, and she wanted a husband, but she wanted a husband of elegant style, a fair share of good looks, and unlimited devotion. She had found her *beau ideal* in Dare. He had been very attentive during this season past, but he had fought shy of the import issue, and if Dare had been desperate Miss Ferguson was no less so in reference to the old Sir Sholto Norton Hayes. European sojourn was waited back to her, and in her haste she had followed him up, determined that this next week at Thornhurst should decide their fates. Mr. Sholto Norton Hayes had attached himself to the very nick of time to become a witness in the fall lady's hands. She who had never bent from her iceberg severity, unless indeed to Dare, now stooped to conquer. She smiled mild encouragement upon Mr. Hayes, and took him in her train, and swept said train off to Thornhurst. In greater haste than her own rather particularly, she had been willing to approve. But it was one of those great issues requiring great measures; for the only time in her life Miss Ferguson forfeited her regard for *les convenances* and proved herself equal to the occasion.

Dare rose himself to make his usual careful toilet, and went down, half an hour later, when a second, loudly-clanging bell cleft the brooding quiet. The quiet changed to a small buzz, in the four ladies made their appearance in a body, and the gentlemen following close, the whole party went in to dinner—fifteen, more or less, and the ladies were in the dining-hall since the last annual visit of the Ferguson to Thornhurst.

Colonel Vivian was a genial host, and there was no flagging of the general enjoyment as the various courses were discussed.

Long, slanting shadows crept in over the lawn, and the last of the sun-rays struck the windows and the windows and the walls of the stately mansion. Miss Ferguson and her young lady friends were grouped picturesquely in the drawing-room, the former silent, the latter animatedly discussing the relative merits of the two young gentlemen, Owen Dare and Owen Vivian, as the gentlemen themselves followed so speedily that in a few minutes the ladies were involved in the comparative attractions of wine and ladies. It must have reflected strongly to the favor of the latter.

Colonel Vivian alone lingered, and Sholto Hayes was detained in the drawing-room by Mrs. Ferguson. The other three passed out through the wide open windows, and in a moment after than design Miss Augusta found herself alone with Dare, with the lady stretching between them and other companions, strolling side by side at the edge of the fish-pond, which was one of Colonel Vivian's favorite haunts.

The sun was quite down now and the purple tints of twilight fast succeeding. The distant voices mingled with the faint rustling of leaves borne upon the breeze. Here was solitude, romantic, and here was the witching hour which is prone to delude. The fair Augusta's heart beat perceptibly faster, a faint contradiction to the calm, but Dare had once been told that she did not more heart than a statue. Had she maneuvered for it she could not have brought about a more auspicious combination of circumstances. The question would have been, whether the tag of the opportunity? She led the conversation with artful references to his own expected absence and her probable plans.

"Yes," he said, indolently suppressing a yawn, "two years do look rather long ahead. The voyage will be a bore, and doing the continent something tedious. I haven't a doubt. But to a mortal who has no aspirations for the future it's about one whether the months drag through here in the States, or in China, or Hindostan, to say nothing of the intervening localities. For my part I don't know that I'd give a penny for the difference."

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The Dumb Page:
OR,
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BY FREDERICK WHITTAKER,
AUTHOR OF "THE IRISH CAPTAIN," "THE RED RAJAH," "THE ROCK RIDER," "THE SEA CAT," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER IX.
THE DOGE'S DAUGHTER.

JULIA DANDOLO, the young daughter of the aged Doge, was not in the ducal palace. She lived in the private palace of the Dandolo family, where she was now, in deep conversation with her cousin, the Countess Milleroni.

Julia was the child of her father's old age, his one darling, whom he felt too jealous of, even to allow her to marry. As a devotee had she been brought up, in charge of the pious brothers and sisters of the church, who flattered themselves that in her young mind the world was effectually buried. Surrounded by such influences, seeing none of the gay society of the city, Julia might have been expected to be subdued to a nonentity.

Quite the contrary. She was only bored. She inherited too much of her father's fiery energy to be made a recluse, and too much of her Florentine mother's subtle pliancy to rebel openly. The end of this restraint, under which she was kept, was singular. From ten to sixteen she employed her mind on mastering every science and language that the holy fathers could teach her. At seventeen she could tell any one of them all she knew. At eighteen she also knew her own powers, and was planning incessantly to escape abroad and exercise them.

At eighteen and a half, when we meet her, she was an accomplished mistress of deceit, with the innocent grace of a kitten to hide its claws. Julia Dandolo was small and slight, very pretty, with long, bright curls and blue eyes. She was leaning on Estella's knee, looking up into her eyes coaxingly as he said:

"But indeed, Estella, it was but a harmless affair. I saw the cavalier only a week ago, and it is so dull here, you know. How could I help speaking to him? You know I never went out and enjoyed myself as you do."

"And I never went out till I was married," expostulated the countess severely. "It is not fitting, Julia, for a young girl to talk to strange men. Men are like roaring lions, seeking whom they may devour."

Julia glanced up at her sage cousin from under her bright curls, with a strange, keen look in her blue eyes.

"But you talk to men, cousin," she said softly. "Guiseppina told me, only this morning, that you were the belle of the Foscari ball, the night before last."

The countess flushed angrily, as she replied: "Guiseppina is a gossiping servant girl, and I should think that you would not refer to that night, when only my interference, along with Captain Bonetta's, saved you from being the public talk. If I had told your father, as I threatened, you would have been sent off to the convent of Madonna del Mare before this."

Julia pouted slightly.

"Captain Bonetta's very kind," she said, peevishly. "I wish he and you would leave me alone. I don't think it's fair that the only man I ever saw, should be betrothed to some one else. I don't count priests."

Estella lifted her hands in pious horror. Her proper and well regulated notions were inexpressibly shocked by the surprising heresies of this little rebel.

"Julia," she said, severely, "I must keep my word and tell him."

"You may save yourself the trouble," murmured Julia, in a lamblike voice; "I told him yesterday, when you were on the lake, madonna, along with Don Lorenzo."

And the little kitten shot up a glance that plainly said:

"How do you like that?"

The countess sat for a moment in speechless amazement. How did this child, shut up among recluses, know all this? Julia kindly informed her before she asked:

"Oh! you needn't think I don't know any thing," she added, tossing her bright curls. "Papa mia is no so terrible as you think him. He lets Guiseppina go out and get me the news of the city, now and then. And I told him all about how Don Lorenzo had come to our palace to give me some secret news about a Turkish conspiracy, and how you and that stupid Captain Bonetta interfered and hurt the poor old man."

"Old man!" exclaimed Estella, amazed. "Who do you mean?"

"Poor old Don Lorenzo," said Julia, plaintively. "I never saw him except in the dark, but he says that he is very old."

The countess looked at Julia with a wistful glance. The blue-eyed kitten returned the gaze with the guileless innocence of a newborn angel. Estella was five years older than her cousin, a brilliant woman of society, and till that day had been accustomed to overawe the other. She began to think that Julia knew too much. She tried to put her down by an assumption of authority.

"You wicked girl," she exclaimed, "you have deceived your poor blind father. Who would have thought it would come to this? I will send for father Francis, your confessor. We will see if he bread and water penance will bring you to your senses."

"You needn't trouble yourself," protested Julia, pouting; "I told papa how cross father Francis was, and he has promised to have a fresh confessor for me."

The countess was about to answer when a great clattering was heard on the stone floor of the corridor outside.

"There he is now," said Julia, triumphantly. "That's my new confessor, Father Ambrose. Now tell him what you like."

The door opened, and a monk in the brown habit of the Carmelites entered the room, his wooden sandals making a great clatter. The monk was rather tall, but stooped with age, and wore a very long, bushy gray beard. He had a weary air and kept his eyes fixed on the ground. One of them was covered with a black shade, and the other looked reddened around the lids, as if inflamed.

"Pax vobiscum, my daughters!" he said, in a low voice, (of remarkable sweetness, however.) "I was told that I should find my young charge, the lady Julia, here. I am poor Father Ambrose, of Mount Carmel, and my superior has sent me to care for that tender lamb and lead her in the right path."

"You will find it a hard task, father," declared the countess, in a severe tone. "The child is very, very troublesome! What do you say, father, to her conversing from her chamber window with a young cavalier, without her father's knowledge?"

The good monk lifted up his hands in amazement, although he kept his eyes fixed on the ground, under the rule of his order. He groaned deeply and said:

"The devouring wolf is ever ready to rend the tender lamb. The poor, silly lamb knows not of the peril. We must be gentle with her, madonna, and teach her the right way. She seems so good."

In fact, Julia looked the picture of penitence, as she hung her pretty head, and glanced shyly at the grave confessor from under her curls.

"Let us commence our office, my daughter," he half ordered. "The church is a good mother to her repentant child, and honest confession is good for the soul. Madonna, let us pray you to leave us, for the church would be alone with her daughter."

The countess rose with a satisfied air.

"Certainly, father, and I hope you will be severe with her, for she deserves it richly. Your blessing, father."

She sunk on her knees, and the monk waved his hand over her in benediction.

"Benedicite, filia mea!" he said; "Pax Domini tecum, in secula. Amen."

The countess glided from the room in silence, and Father Ambrose resumed his seat in a large chair. The humility of demeanor he had worn ceased, as the steps of the countess receded on the stone flagging. The authority of the confessor replaced it.

Julia came near, with charming timidity, and knelt at his feet, when the Carmelite observed:

"Begin, my daughter, with the cavalier, yonder lady mentioned. Who was he? How came he under your window?"

Julia bent her head with a crimson blush. It is so difficult to tell these things to a man. She began to cry.

He was a handsome cavalier, father, so handsome. I saw him first from my window, one evening, as he passed by in his gondola, and he kissed his hand to me. And then, every evening, at the same hour, he passed in front of the house and turned down the side canal. And one moonlight night as I sat by the window, when every one was asleep, he came again, and sung, oh! so sweetly. And before he went he shot an arrow up into my window, and oh! father! there was a letter wrapped round it. Wasn't he bold?"

The Carmelite turned away his head a moment, and said in a gruff tone:

"Go on, child. Heaven defend the lamb from the wolf."

"But he wasn't a bit like the wolf, father," she protested. "He was about your height, with lovely black hair and eyes. And what do you think he said in his letter?"

"Ask me not, child," answered Father Ambrose, grimly; "those wicked men are all alike. He asked you to meet him somewhere, no doubt, or to change your room to some more quiet part of the house. The wiles of the devil are thousand."

"Why father," with a little low laugh, "you must be a wizard! How could you know that?" He told me that he knew I could do anything with my father—and so I can, you know, and that I ought to ask him to change my room to one in the side of the house just over the little postern where it was quieter. And I did, and I was very wicked, but it was so dull and quiet, and I longed so to see him. And so, father, we met, and he was so respect-

ful and tender, and we changed rings, and—ah!"

Julia broke off with a low shriek of surprise, and terror. One of the monk's hands, hitherto hidden in his long sleeve, stole out, white and tapering on his knee, and on the little finger gleamed a ring, composed of five jewels, amethyst, malachite, onyx, ruby and emerald. The initial letters of the five composed the Italian word *amore*—love, and the girl recognized the ring.

"Hush!" said the false monk, in an eager whisper; "Julia, my love, my queen of hearts, I have risked death to see thee. It is I, Lorenzo."

He prevented her screaming by catching her to his breast, and covering her head with his wide sleeves. But after the first moment of surprise the clever girl seemed to have no intention of screaming. She nestled up to her disguised lover, and said, plaintively:

"Why didn't you show me that before? I could have teased Estella so."

Don Lorenzo laughed.

"I didn't dare to," he exclaimed. "You would have started and betrayed all. You are no actress yet, my poor, innocent little dove. Safe in your dove-cot from the snares of the fowler you have no occasion for deceit yet."

Julia looked up at him with a peculiar glance, and withdrew herself from his arms.

"You think so? Well, you are right. I had no occasion for deceit till I saw Don Lorenzo."

Bellarion opened his arms coaxingly.

"Don't let us quarrel, Julia mia," he pleaded; "our enemies are outwitted, and we can be happy. Did I not do it well? As he approached her, the girl retreated, pointing her finger at him.

"Oh! how ugly you look!" she exclaimed. "Don't come near me while you look like that. I shall never be able to think of you again as my handsome Lorenzo."

Bellarion halted, a little confused, and began to take the black shade off his eye. His vanity was wounded.

"Oh! here they come! Here they come!" cried Julia, with every symptom of terror. "Put it on again or you will be found out."

And indeed the sound of approaching footsteps was plainly audible. Lorenzo replaced the patch and resumed his seat, while Julia threw herself at his feet and began a rattling fire of teasing remarks till the door opened.

The little girl seemed to be determined to prove to her lover that, deep as he was, she was no novice.

"Ah! how ugly you look!" she whispered, making a little grimace of disgust, and giving him a sly pinch; "you have painted one eye, and covered the other, till you look like a starved beggar. I shall never like you again (pinch). I've got you now, signor. You think I knew nothing of your love-making yesterday. Over the sparkling, sparkling sea! (pinch). Call out if you dare, and the scurvy will have you in one minute, for coming here in disguise (pinch). I'll teach you to go about making love to all the beauties of Venice, and especially to my saintly cousin (pinch) Estella, (vicious pinch)."

The door opened at the last words, after several unanswered knocks, and the Countess Milleroni, followed by a liveried messenger, entered, and found the innocent Julia on her knees, with clasped hands and bended head, her face the impersonation of sweet humility and heartstricken penitence.

"Oh! father," she murmured, so wrapped in sorrow as to be insensible to surrounding objects; "how shall I ever obtain forgiveness for my terrible, terrible sins? You have brought to my mind so fully what a wretch I was to have anything to do with that infamous Spaniard, that common stabber and bravo, Don Lorenzo Bellarion. Indeed, father, I accuse myself of everything wicked in regard to him, and for being so rude to my good cousin Estella. And indeed, father, I hate and despise that infamous wretch Bellarion, and I will ask my father to have him beheaded for a traitor."

"Peace, my daughter!" said the false monk with admirable gravity, and quite as unconscious to all appearance of the presence of strangers; "Bellarion was a bad man, but he is now truly repentant, and there is much joy in heaven over such. But now my daughter, it behooves thee to forgive him, as he is sincerely penitent, and so thou mayest prepare thyself to receive absolution after penance performed. In the first place thou must crave pardon on thy knees of the worthy countess, and of Captain Bonetta, for thine evil talk against them, and then—"

The countess motioned to the servant, and the two softly retired, closing the door behind them. As soon as it was closed Julia inflicted a violent pinch in revenge on Don Lorenzo, and then they heard several loud knocks on the door and coughing.

"I'll beg her pardon," muttered Julia, revengefully; "but I'll make you pay for it first, signor monk."

"Come in!" cried Don Lorenzo, desperately, the fear of the consequences of detection alone restraining him from crying out, so viciously did the artful little mix torment him.

The door opened again, and the religious father was once more presented to view. Don Lorenzo turned his head and the countess saluted him respectfully.

"Reverend father," she said; "I am sorry to disturb your duties, but his highness, the Doge, has just sent an urgent message requesting the immediate attendance of his own daughter and myself on important business."

The venerable monk bowed his head meekly.

"It is well, my daughter," he considered; "the lady Julia can go. I have confessed her and enjoined a penance upon her, which she will now perform. Come forward, madonna."

The countess swept forward, and the monk led her to the kneeling penitent, who repeated with angelic patience, after her confessor.

"Dear cousin, I spoke very ill to you, and I crave your pardon and that of Heaven therefore. Please forgive me."

The countess raised her and embraced her warmly. Julia laid her head on her cousin's shoulder with a sob, and made a grimace at the reverend father, unseen by any one else.

Then the two cousins left the room, preceded by the servant, and humble Father Ambrose hobbled after, making a great clatter with his wooden sandals.

CHAPTER X.
OFF WITH THE OLD LOVE.

At the waterstaircase of the Dandolo palace lay a state barge, into which the ladies stepped, closely veiled. Humble Father Ambrose was about to retire, when the countess graciously beckoned him forward.

"We shall be too much honored by your company, father," she said. "There are no secrets too great not to be shared with the church."

The Carmelite bowed with great humility, and sat down in the boat next to the countess, keeping clear of the dangerous vicinity of Julia Dandolo.

He displayed the same edifying humility all

the way to the palace, and even removed his sandals to avoid disturbing the magnates as they passed up the grand staircase by the lion's mouth. The servant preceded the ladies down the long passages till he ushered them into the Doge's private cabinet, where they found the old warrior all alone seated by the window, and looking haggard and weary.

"Is it thou, Matteo?" asked the Doge quickly, as he turned round at the opening of the door.

"It is, your highness," replied the servant. "I have brought the ladies and their ghostly father to see your highness."

"Welcome, my children," said the blind old man, sadly. "The holy father is welcome, too. Matteo, retire. Julia, my child, come close to me. I cannot see thee, child, but I know thou art there. Estella, come hither, and you, holy father. I have a sad tale to tell thee, my brother's child. Would to God it were not so, but Estella, it is better coming from me than from another."

Julia was already at her father's knee, silently kissing his hand. The countess caught her breath and turned pale, as she asked:

"My lord, what mean you? Is he hurt? Has he fought Don Lorenzo?"

The Doge shook his head sadly. Julia glanced keenly up at Estella, with a look of surprise.

"I know nothing of Don Lorenzo," declared the Doge. "He was a good and gallant officer five years ago, but they tell me he has been wild and dissipated since. Ah! well. I was a wild youth once. He may do well yet. No, Estella, it is not of Don Lorenzo that I would speak, but of Antonio Bonetta, that captain whom I trusted, whom I made commander of the red galleys, my own guard in battle, the man whom I made noble, and promised to take the place of Milleroni, dead in the arms of victory. Antonio Bonetta is a traitor to the land of his adoption, and he has fled Venice to go to the Turk."

Estella had been growing paler and paler as he proceeded. At the last words she uttered a sharp cry of pain.

"Gone! Antonio! I cannot be! My lord, I saw him only the night before last."

"Estella," said the Doge, firmly, "he is gone. And hidden in his room was found a letter proving him to be in league with the Turk."

"But how know you this, my lord?" she gasped out. "May not there be a mistake?"

The old Doge waved his hand for silence.

"Peace!" he cried. "In the lion's mouth was found his accusation, which also designated the hiding place of Dandolo Pasha's letter. We sent there and found it, and learned, moreover, that Bonetta left Venice last night in the carnival, with dispatches, sailing for Leghorn. He must have got wind of suspicion from some quarter."

The countess looked wildly around her and met the sad, pitying glance of Father Ambrose. She shuddered, and burst into bitter tears.

"Oh! my lord, my lord," she sobbed; "what have I done that this disgrace should fall upon me?"

The Doge bowed his white head sadly.

"On all of us, Estella," he answered, "unless we cast away all memory of this ungrateful traitor."

The countess stamped her foot haughtily.

"Let it perish forever!" she exclaimed, all the pride of five centuries of nobles blazing in her large hazel eyes. "Never shall it be said that a daughter of Dandolo wept for a traitor whose tears due only to the memory of the brave. My lord, do as you will with him. Henceforth the name of that man never crosses my lips. Fled to the Turk! Let him flee! Estella Milleroni only sorrows that her own hand cannot send the traitor to the block to save her country."

Julia had been perfectly still all this while at her father's knee. Now she asked:

"And what will be done to Bonetta, if he comes back, papa mia?"

"Death!" thundered the old Doge, raising his shaking hand. "Venice was his foster mother. She warmed and fed him. Estella, thou art my other daughter. Thou shouldst be a man, for the spirit of Dandolo is strong in thee."

Father Ambrose turned his back and looked out of the window.

"And she pretended to love this man!" said he to himself, with a bitter sneer. "Madonna! Madonna! My vengeance is going onward."

Julia Dandolo looked at her cousin wistfully.

"Estella," she said, slyly; "you will be consoled."

The countess flushed scarlet and turned away.

CHAPTER XI.
THE BROTHERS BOTTARMA.

The setting sun glowed crimson, the gleaming belt of the Arno, as it bathed the walls of Florence the fair. The tall cypresses waved in the evening breeze, and the tall white shaft of the Campanile of Giotto, just newly built, shot up beside the magnificent dome of Santa Maria del Fiore.

A tall gaunt man, whose pale and hollow cheeks bespoke recent illness, while the breadth of his shoulders, showing tremendous bone, was contradicted by his skeleton outline, as far as regarded present strength, rode in at the western gate mounted on a mule. He was dressed in a faded jerkin, and hose of blue and red, that looked as if they had been part of a uniform once, and his right arm was a sling. Every now and then, as he went, he coughed feebly, and appeared to be in the last stage of exhaustion.

Compassionate glances reached him from various quarters as he rode in, and pulling up his sorry mule, inquired feebly the way to "the brothers Bottarma."

"But every one knows them," answered the worthy citizen addressed; "they live in the Strada Nova, about two streets from this. You will know the house by the crossed swords over the door, with the mortar and pestle above them. A wonderful pair, neighbor. The one brother can wound any man despite all his best efforts. That is Nicola, the master of fence. The other can cure any wound not mortal, so that one makes trade for the other. Nicola and Guiseppa, leech and fencing-master. A great pair, and an honor to Florence. No where else could you find such." And the worthy citizen puffed with importance. "Methinks you look as if you needed the leech, friend," he resumed, inquisitively. "Where from, if I may ask?"

"Purgatory!" said the stranger, grimly, as he shook the rein on the weary mule's neck; "and going to the other place as fast as I can. The Florentine gossip stood gazing after the grim stranger, the picture of amazed horror.

"Well!" he ejaculated, as soon as he found his breath; "it must be the devil himself! From purgatory and going to hell! I never heard such a thing in all my life! I'll go and tell neighbor Scutelli."

And he bustled off, open-mouthed. Meanwhile the grim stranger rode off up the

street to the house of the celebrated brothers Bottarna.

He soon saw it, a handsome edifice, of that beautiful ornamental brick-work of which the Italians of the fifteenth century were such masters, in the severe Italian gothic style. Over the deep doorway were the immense crossed swords, and above them a great gilt pessel and mortar, with the name BOT-TARMA FRATELLI in large gold letters beneath.

The tired man slowly and stiffly swung himself from his jaded mule, which he fastened to a stone hitching-post outside. Then he dragged himself rather than walked to the door, and beat on it with the pommel of the rapier he wore.

Having struck three blows, he was fain to sink down on the stone seat by the side of the deep porch, and cough hard, spitting blood as he did so.

Presently the door opened; and a stout, medium-sized man, with a square, good-humored face, short black beard, eye of remarkable keenness, and a general appearance of vigorous health and strength, stood looking at the shabby stranger, who was bent double on the seat, coughing with a deep, cavernous sound. The black-bearded man was in his shirt-sleeves, and the bare arms he showed were masses of corded muscle. He glanced keenly at his visitor, then at the mule, and turned his head inside the house.

"Ho! brother!" he shouted, in a stentorian voice; "come down. Thou'rt wanted!"

The shabby stranger raised his head.

"I want both of you," he said, in a low, hoarse voice; "him first and you afterward, if you are Nicola Bottarna."

"I am Nicola Bottarna," said the black-bearded man, kindly; "but my brother will have to take care of you for long before I can have anything to do with you. Here he is now. Brother, here is a sick man. Shall I carry him in?"

A much taller man, slender and intellectual looking, but very like Nicola, although his face was clean-shaven, came out and eyed the stranger keenly for a few moments. Then he felt his pulse, and looked at the jaded mule.

"How far have you come to-day?" he asked, abruptly.

"From Leghorn," said the stranger, faintly.

"Where are you hurt?" asked the leech.

"Here, and here," responded the other, pointing with his left hand to his right breast and shoulder.

"Carry him in, 'Cola," said Giuseppe Bottarna, briefly.

The fencing-master picked up this man of six foot three in his arms, as if he had been an infant, and carried him into the house. Giuseppe went out, untied the mule, gave him a kick and said:

"Go home where you belong. I know you well enough."

The animal trotted off down the street to a sort of lively stable that was there. Bottarna recognized him as belonging there, and knew he was safe.

Then this eccentric specimen of medieval doctor re-entered the house, slammed the door and entered a large room, where he found Nicola, or 'Cola, as he was called for short, standing over the shabby stranger, who lay on a couch. Giuseppe advanced and before he uttered a word, he addressed the other's wounds and examined them. They proved to be a puncture in the right shoulder, some three inches deep, and three-cornered in shape, and a second wound in the right breast near the shoulder, going clear through to the back. Both wounds were very foul and feverish.

"You must go to bed," said Giuseppe. "Your wounds are healthy enough, but you've fevered them to-day. You must have the strength of a bull to have come from Leghorn with these drains on you."

"Stop!" said the stranger; "how long will it be before I am strong again?"

"Your wounds will heal in two months," said the leech. "After that, 'Cola must take you in hand. He does the training."

The stranger suddenly rose up to his full height before them. He was of vast frame, and must have been very strong when in health. His sunken blue eyes burned with a fierce, feverish glitter, and his matted hair and beard were both of a dull, dusty gray.

"See here," he said; "you see this ring. It is all I have in the world now. It is a diamond, as you see, and it is worth at least ten thousand crowns. I will give you that if you will cure me, and teach me how to handle the sword so as to beat you, 'Cola Bottarna."

'Cola took the ring and examined it admiringly.

"You are too modest, signor," he said; "this ring is worth at least thirty thousand scudi. We can not rob you like that. We will sell it for you if you wish, and keep ten thousand scudi, and we do not ask so much. My brother can cure you, and I can teach you to fence. But it only rests with yourself to beat me. I can not supply you with brains and activity. The best pupil I ever had was Don Lorenzo Bellario. He could beat all the others, but I could not teach him to beat me. He had no patience to study."

The stranger caught at the sound of the last name with great eagerness.

"Tell me one thing," he said, with great eagerness; "if I am patient and untiring, never resting from thought day or night, practicing constantly with you, obeying all your instructions, can you promise me that I shall beat him—Bellario?"

He ground out the last word through his teeth in such a fury as set him to coughing again. Giuseppe Bottarna made him sit down, and 'Cola answered the question of his eyes.

"Certainly I can," he said, confidently; "you have reach and strength, when you are well. What you want is quickness. I can give you that in three or four months. Bellario will never make what I call a perfect fence. He plays his point too wildly. To cure him, you must learn the stop-thrust. That done, you can laugh at him."

"And will you do this?" asked the stranger, eagerly.

"I will," said 'Cola; "what is your name?"

"Sell the diamond," was the stranger's answer, as he sunk back, exhausted; "my name is Schiavo d'Amore."

(To be continued—commenced in No. 260.)

JOY descends gently upon us like the evening dew, and does not patter down like a hail-storm.—Richter.

Some men's reputation seems like seed-wheat, which thrives best when brought from a distance.—Whately.

How much easier it is to be generous than just! Men are sometimes bountiful who are not honest.—Junius.

We do not judge men by what they are in themselves, but by what they are relatively to us.—Madame Swetchine.

The Slave of Love. Italian.

"REFLECTIONS."

BY "ORAPE MYRTLE."

My soul is stirred by some commotion,
As memory turns with small emotion
To the past.
To see the thousand petty sorrows,
Youth without compunction borrows,
Dead at last.

Poor human heart! how oft thou'lt languish,
Whilst the soul grew dark with anguish,
O'er a trifle!
For some wish perchance ungranted,
Or a vision disenchanted;
Such is life.

Idle dreams, ambitious lusts,
In life's web and woof doth cluster,
But to cheat.
Golden fancies none too humble,
Young minds rest doth often crumble
At the feet.

The fondest ties I've had to sever,
And seen hope's glories fade forever
From my sight.
And watched the purple dawnings,
Of ambition's justrous morning
Fade to night.

Yet my soul is not encumbered
By the ghost of memory's numbered
With the dead.
As lightning through the storm-cloud flashes,
Rays from out their scattered ashes;
Spring instead.

And the beacon peace is burning,
In that old restless yearning,
For life's cross.
And thus I know the hand ne'er crosses
Over soft and thornless roses
In life's cross.

False Faces:

OR,
THE MAN WITHOUT A NAME.

A MYSTERY OF THE GREAT METROPOLIS.

BY GEO. L. AIKEN,
AUTHOR OF "A LIVING LIE," "SNARED TO DEATH," "BERNAL CLYDE," "ELMA'S CAPTIVITY," "STELLA, A STAR."

CHAPTER XXII.

A PRESENTIMENT OF DANGER.

KATE VEHLAGE came into the room, with her basket of provisions on her arm, for she was the caterer for the small family in the tenement house.

Etta, who had just spread a snowy white cloth over the table, preparatory to the evening meal, knew by the sound of the closing door that something was the matter with Kate, and so she turned around to look at her.

Kate's face was flushed, and her sharp, black eyes were glistening angrily.

"Well, what has put you in a pet now?" asked Etta, composedly.

These ebullitions of temper on the part of Kate never discomposed her. She was too much accustomed to the outbreaks of that vivacious young female.

"The contemptible sneak!" cried Kate, putting her basket down, with a thump, on the side-table. "I've seen him again!"

"He—who?"

"That man with the false face; don't you remember the night I was going for the medicine for Mr. Shaw?"

She sunk her voice suddenly here, and glanced at the door of communication between the apartments. "Is he in there?" she added, in a hoarse whisper.

"No; he went out, and has not yet returned. How about this man? Where did you meet him?"

"Right here, at the door."

"Our door?"

"No, the street door. I was coming home with the things for tea, and there he stood at the door, with a smirk on his face, a face just like a terrier dog's. 'I believe you are Miss Vehlage,' says he. 'That's my name,' says I, never letting on that I remembered him, 'and I am not ashamed of it.' 'Couldn't I sell you a sewing machine,' says he, 'on the easiest terms, and a guarantee of steady work until it's paid for.' 'No,' says I, as short as you please. But he's one of those chaps that won't take no for an answer. 'There's two of you,' he goes on, 'to run it, Miss Ward and yourself.' 'How did you know there was a Miss Ward here?' says I. 'Lord! you need not get huffy about it,' says he, showing his teeth, and grinning like a pleased monkey. 'There's no secret about it; is there, that you and Miss Ward—Miss Henrietta Ward—are living together, and doing sewing for your living?' 'How do you know that?' says I, snapping him up again. 'Why the butcher says so, that's all,' says he; 'I hope there's no offense in my mentioning it. Come, try one of my machines. I'll send you one around this evening, if you say so.' Then I told him it was none of his business if Miss Henrietta Ward was living with me; that we didn't want a sewing machine any way, and that we would not buy one of him if we did, and left him standing there and came up stairs."

"You did not say anything to him about Mr. Shaw?" inquired Etta, anxiously.

"Oh, no; you told me never to mention his name to anybody, and I don't."

"That's right."

"What do you suppose this chap wanted?"

"He wanted to sell you a sewing machine. Didn't he say so?"

"Yes, of course; but I think that was all fudge."

"Judge?"

"Yes; that was only a pretext to hide his game."

Etta looked surprised.

"Game?" she repeated. "Do you think this man had any sign against us?"

"Yes, that's exactly what I do think!" replied Kate, emphatically.

"But what possible design could this man have against us?" asked Etta.

"I don't know; but I do know that he is up to something. He's not sneaking round here for nothing."

"Are you positive that he was the same man from whose face you pulled the mask that night?"

"I'll take my oath of it! You know I told you I should know his face if I ever saw it again."

"It must have made a strong impression, upon you," cried Etta, laughingly.

"It did; he was so awfully homely. Now what do you suppose he is poking round here after?"

"I am sure I can not say."

"No good, I'll bet."

"Perhaps not; and yet I cannot see what possible harm he can do us. Do you?"

Kate deliberated over this question for a moment.

"Well, no," she replied. "If he dares to come up here I'll take the poker or the broom to him. It may be that he had seen you in the street and is smitten. There would be nothing strange in that. Your face fetches

these fellows every time. Not that he's particularly young—somewhere near forty I should think. But there's no chance for him."

"Do you think so?" asked Etta, smiling at the owl-like gravity with which Kate pronounced these words.

The question appeared to surprise Kate somewhat.

"Of course not!" she answered. "Why, I wouldn't take him myself, and I'm not so particular as you are. It's no use for him to come around here, and he'll soon find it out."

"I do not think he will trouble us after what you said to him," rejoined Etta.

"If he's got any sense he won't. But some men are such awful fools, particularly when they are in love, you can never tell what they will do! Would you say anything to Mr. Shaw about this?"

"No; why should we? I do not consider the matter of sufficient consequence."

"Well, you know best. Now I'll help you get the supper ready for him."

Peter Shaw soon arrived. He was in very good spirits. He had just come from his office where he had held a consultation with Frank Ray, the detective, who had been introduced to him by Chester Starke.

He had been much pleased with the detective. He liked his looks, and his manner of expressing himself. He thought him a stout young fellow, with a keen wit, and great energy of action. A man who might be depended upon in the most trying emergency.

He looked upon him as a valuable aid in his design against the False Faces; and then there was Chester Starke, equally strong in limb and just as reliable, and shrewd Ossian Plummer, the best friend he had ever had.

The destruction of Edgar Skelmersdale and his villainous associates seemed inevitable.

Peter Shaw rubbed his hands pleasantly together as he sat at the supper-table, and Kate passed him his cup of tea.

"Ah! what a comfort it is to see two young and smiling faces about one!" he cried, never considering that their smiles were but the reflection of his own, for they found his geniality infectious.

"Well, dear girls, we shall soon leave this house for more comfortable quarters. I don't know why I should say that either, for I have really enjoyed an astonishing degree of comfort here. What I mean to say is, that we shall leave it for a more respectable and cleaner neighborhood. My friend Ossian has secured a house for us."

"Ossian!" exclaimed Kate. "That's a queer name."

Peter Shaw chuckled pleasantly.

"Yes, and it's a queer name that bears it," he replied. "He's an old friend of mine, and a tried and trusted one. You'll soon see him, and I want you to like him for my sake."

"We may like him for his own," returned Kate. "Is he young and good-looking?"

"Neither. He's of middle age and very plain."

"Oh!" ejaculated Kate, disappointedly.

"I thought I should get up a match between you and him," continued Peter Shaw, his eyes twinkling mischievously.

Kate snuffed the air disdainfully.

"Thank you," she rejoined; "but I may not like his style."

"He's very rich," said Shaw, artfully.

"Hum!" cried Kate, with quite a change of tone. "I should like to see Mr. Ossian."

"Ossian Plummer—Ossian is his first name," Peter Shaw stirred the contents of his tea-cup and glanced at Etta's placid face. He was brimful of his fun that evening. "And then there's my other friend, and partner, I've picked him out for Etta," he continued.

"For me?" asked Etta, opening her large blue eyes widely in surprise.

"Oh!" exclaimed Kate. "He's going to fix us both! Why, he's just like a father to us."

Peter Shaw smiled benignantly.

"That's just what I intend to be," he answered. "You'll never know the want of a father while I live."

Etta returned his smile affectionately. Her heart had fully determined the relationship between them. But Kate's curiosity was greatly exercised by the mention of the other friend and partner.

"What's he like?" she cried, in her vivacious manner. "Is he middle-aged, too, and homely, and rich, and what's his name?"

Peter Shaw laughed at this string of questions.

"How curious you are!" he rejoined.

"Not a bit! Only I'd like to know."

"You shall. His name is Chester Starke; he's from Vermont, as tall and as straight as a pine tree, and young and good-looking."

"Oh, my!" ejaculated Kate. "Why didn't you pick him out for me! He's just my style!"

"I thought he was better suited for Etta. You are dark complexioned and so is he. Two darks don't go well together, don't you see? It doesn't answer to have a husband and wife look too much alike."

"Oh! doesn't it?" responded Kate, dubiously. "Is he rich?" she added, suddenly.

"No."

"Then he can't have Etta—that's settled. No one but a rich man can marry her. That face of hers is worth something."

"Oh! you've settled that between you, have you?"

Etta smiled, and answered:

"No, she has settled it for me. That's Kate's great idea, that my face is to make my fortune."

"And so it will," returned Peter Shaw; "though not perhaps in the way that she imagines. However, that would not have been any very strong objection against Chester Starke, as he will undoubtedly be a rich man in the course of a few years. His interest in the business will make him so."

"And what will it make you?" asked Kate, slyly.

"Well, I shall have enough to live on comfortably."

"I should say so. I only wish I had the quarter of it."

"Take Ossian Plummer then," he suggested, roguishly. "He's worth more than a quarter."

"Oh! let her have the other one," cried Etta, entering more into the spirit of the jest than Kate did. "At all events, give him the chance to choose between us."

"That's fair," said Peter Shaw.

Kate tossed her head.

"Oh, is it?" she exclaimed. "What kind of a chance would I stand alongside of her? But that's just like her! She never thinks of herself. She'd let anybody crowd her one side sooner than make any fuss about it."

"Ah, yes, I have known such a disposition before," answered Peter Shaw, and there was a plaintive cadence in his voice. "Well, well, as Etta says, let Chester Starke decide for himself. You will soon see him. Ossian has rented a furnished cottage for me on Eightieth street—a cosy little house, with a nice large yard in front, with trees, shrubbery and a grape-vine. Then it is only a short walk from the Central Park, so that one can take a pleas-

ant stroll there of an afternoon. It is quiet and secluded there, and we shall not be disturbed I think. There will not be any one left in the city to trouble us if my plans only work right; and I think they will—I think they will."

He leaned back in his chair, and rubbed his hands together pleasantly. "We shall all be gathered together under one roof-tree then," he continued, "and you young people will have an opportunity to get acquainted."

"Won't that be nice?" exclaimed Kate.

"Yes; I think we shall all be very happy there," said Etta. "When shall we go?"

"In two or three days," answered Peter Shaw. "I cannot fix the time exactly now. There is something that I wish to do first. Matters are in good train and the affair will be speedily settled, I hope. You can content yourselves here for a few days longer?"

"I should say so," replied Kate, "considering how long we have lived here. But I shall not be sorry to leave this house, shall you, Etta?"

"Indeed I shall not; but I will do whatever Mr. Shaw thinks to be best."

"Of course; so will I."

Peter Shaw smiled.

"What docile young ladies you are," he said. "You place great trust in me, and yet I am almost a stranger to you."

"It seems as if I had known you for a long time," answered Etta.

"So it does to me!" followed Kate.

Peter Shaw smiled again, saying:

"Well, girls, your trust in me will meet with a rich reward; you'll never be sorry for it."

"I am sure we shall not," responded Etta, earnestly.

A strong longing arose in Peter Shaw's heart to clasp her in a fond embrace, and own her then and there, but he restrained that feeling. He was too old in the world's experience not to know that the course of human events can never be forecast, that the best laid plans often prove futile, and that a simple accident will often mar the most skillfully contrived scheme.

"No, no," he told himself, "I will wait. Her life is too precious to me to be subjected to the slightest risk. Let me clear these villains from my path, and then I can dispense with all concealment."

Having drunk his tea, Peter Shaw pushed his chair back from the table, and arose to his feet.

"I am going into my room to read the evening paper," he said. "Then I am going out, and I shall not return much before midnight, so you had better not sit up for me. I shall take the key of my door with me, so as not to disturb you."

"Is it safe?" asked Etta, earnestly.

"Oh, yes; don't be under any alarm. I shall be with two friends, who are to meet me by appointment. I shall be perfectly safe, and so will you, for I shall have this house watched during my absence."

The fact was that, trusting to his disguise, he had resolved to aid Chester Starke and the detective in their search that night for the house that contained the council chamber of the False Faces.

Their design was to watch the entire block from corner to corner and observe if any of the parties they suspected entered either house in the row.

On leaving the house Peter Shaw walked to Eightieth street. Ossian Plummer was already domiciled there, and he had thought it best to go for Chester and pass an hour or so there, as they did not purpose commencing their watch until about ten o'clock at night.

Frank Ray, the detective, was to be left to his own discretion, and they were to meet him in front of the row of tenement-houses during the night.

He found Chester and Ossian in the cosy front basement reading, while they awaited his coming.

"This is nice," he said, glancing around the well-furnished apartment. "This selection does credit to your taste, Ossian. The girls will be delighted when I bring them here."

"I wish they were here now," rejoined Ossian.

"Oh! you are anxious to see the lively Kate, are you?" he cried. "Are you equally anxious, Chester?" he added, turning to him.

"I think the young ladies would be a great addition to our society here," answered Chester.

"It isn't because I am anxious to see Kate," said Ossian, with a grim smile. "She'll never worry my peace of mind. It's your daughter I'm anxious about."

"I hope you are not going to set your heart on her, Ossian?" interrupted Shaw, roguishly.

"Don't be a fool, Peter! I ain't a-going to set my heart on any woman—it don't run in my way. I'm thinking you ought to have brought your daughter, and the other girl, up with you this evening. The house is all ready for them. Why not bring them now—this evening, as well as any other time?"

"Because I wish to destroy this infamous band of villains first. It's handy for me to be there, and I find it handy to have them there just at present."

"Perhaps it is," replied Ossian, slowly. "yet still I've got a feeling as if something was going wrong."

"A presentiment of evil?"

"Yes; I s'pose that's what you call it. I've no book learning to make my meaning plain; but it 'pears to me that something's going to happen."

Peter Shaw grew thoughtful as Ossian thus expressed his misgivings.

"But what can happen?" he asked.

"I don't know; but I've got that feeling, and I can't shake it off."

"My precautions are thorough," continued Mr. Shaw. "I have always worn my disguise whenever I went into the street. I have carefully watched to see if I was followed, but nothing has aroused my suspicion. I go constantly armed, and always on the alert for danger, and I do not think it possible that I can be taken by surprise. The girl's existence, or residence, cannot be known to the scoundrels, and they think me dead—and will think so until I have them securely bound in the meshes of the law. Really, I do not see on what side peril can reach us."

"Nor can I," said Chester Starke.

Ossian shook his head gravely.

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Sunshine Papers.

Savoring of the Rostrum.

I HAVE never deluded myself into the belief that I was born to grace the rostrum. In these days, most women who aim to lead a useful life, define usefulness as synonymous with publicity, and rush to the stage, the platform, or the pulpit to do their work. I know I am branding myself as unfashionable when I announce my utter unacquaintance with those much enduring, much abused places. And, alas! unfashionable must I remain. Not the shadowy ghost of intention have I of allowing "my calling" to lead me into a sphere that necessitates wearing of short hair; dragging heavy trails across elevated boards; looking at myself hung on barber's shop-doors, and tumbling about in saloon windows; seeing my name glaring on board-fences—with S. T. 1860 X finishing it like a title upon one side, a guanoac umbrella for a handle to it on the other—and a negro minstrel troupe performing clog dances over me.

Yes, I am sure speech-making is not my calling. Do not I talk? Of course I do, Mr. Inquisitive! Would I be a woman if I did not? But I refer to these public performances that one invigiles one's innocent fellow-creatures into paying to come and hear; and for which if one's friends refuse to be so taken in, one has to pay small boys to distribute tickets about the highways. And yet, occasionally, I do exceedingly wish to deliver a lecture; and, at this present, I am undeniably in a lecturing mood!

There! I thought my fair sisters would be

frightened. Never mind. For once it is not them I wish for an audience. And our brave "lords of creation," of course they will not flinch. They will hear me out; and it is to them that—from the quiet and obscurity of a pleasant home-nook, instead of the gas-lighted glare of the public—I would talk. To them I have a message to deliver; a message straight from the heart, even though it savor a little of the rostrum.

There is a certain two-legged animal, with feathers, renowned the world through as emblematical of vanity. And yet it is inexplicable why that poor bird should have come to be so scorned, should be considered so much more vain than another "two-legged animal without feathers, with broad, flat nails,"—Plato's definition of man. For, there is no denying it, man is supremely vain, conceited, egotistical, and fond, also, of praise, and power, and plaudits. Yet are not these traits, most essentially human, to be lightly esteemed, since they are man's great incentives to win bounteous and spontaneous bestowal of commendation from his fellow-men, by seeking to do well his life's work. Then is it not marvelous—since most men are ambitious, and love to quaff from the glowing cup of life, the satisfying consciousness of having done their best, and that that best was very well indeed, constraining admiration—that they will so often blacken their own fair reputations by putting an "enemy in their mouths to steal away their brains!"

In most people there is a large element of hero-worship; and there are few natures so wholly gross, so entirely warped toward evil, and steeped in selfishness, as not to be incapable of admiration for grandeur and goodness. Art nor nature give us nothing so worthy of admiration as humanity. Life—a thing of will and passion—nobly lived, appeals always to human hearts, inspiring them with honorable enthusiasm, and upward aspirations. Nothing so kindles the blood as records of glorious deeds. And, in daily and hourly contact with our fellow-creatures, we almost unconsciously, but nevertheless fully and freely, give sympathy and admiration wherever we see earnestness of purpose, ambition to attain, and desire to do well.

What, then, so sad as to see him whom we would fain honor, and admire, and help upward with instinctive sympathy, from whose career we have hoped much, and watched with enthusiasm—wrecking all his fair, bright prospects and reaping only scorn where he should laurels!

Have you ever helped to make an audience that awaited the appearance of a city's hero, a public favorite, one that the people have crowned with their love, spurred on with their plaudits, held high with generous sympathy, honored in the sight of greater ones of his profession to show their proud enthusiasm in his career? Have you heard the murmurous outburst of greeting as he comes upon the stage that he has been wont to make a center of interest by his practiced grace, his artistic interpretations, his enthusiastic execution? Have you felt swift flashes of doubt, surprise, suspicion, the gall of suspense, the horror of surety, as the knowledge forces itself that his appearance is a foul stain upon the career that he might make so brilliant, an insult to the people's pride and love—that he is but an agent of the accursed fiend, alcohol? Could you help your heart sickening with disappointment, your pulses throbbing nervously, your blood tingling with mingled compassion and scorn, as you witness his efforts to be quite himself, his failures, his evident torturing knowledge of his own disgrace and inability to conceal it, his confused breaks, his fierce looks at any murmur of disapproval? Would there not a sense of bitter shame that one who had won, could win, honor, could so disown himself?

Have you smiled upon a friend starting on as fair a life-voyage as ever brightened a youth's future? Have you bade "God speed" to his firm step, and felt your heart throbb high in unison with the joyous beating of his? Have you felt that Honor was his watchword, Fame his goal, and that he had a spirit to do or die; that only warm friends were about his path-way, bright suns over him, the incense of sympathy and praise in all the air he breathed? And have you seen him with storms darkening his skies, his powers sinking into inactivity, the promises of his early manhood turning to ashes, his passions becoming his masters, his every pure instinct and high aspiration chilling, drowning in a mad whirlpool of dissipation? Were it not less bitter to see the friend die in youth, than degraded, to less than man, in later years?

Have you listened with stilled heart, and bated breath, to words of eloquence that had all the passion of fire's red heat in them, as they fell burning from the lips of as promising an orator as ever held spell-bound a vast concourse of people? Have you heard in a few short months of his life seared by the flames of deadly spirits that he knew was his curse, and nobly battled with, until one fatal moment when his lips tasted them again, and tasted to find them but a short, mad draught of death? For the glorious life suddenly, blackly quenched, had you not a shudder of divine pity?

And the curse—is it upon you? In the future that holds such white blooms of attainments if you but toil to gather them, is there also the shadow of disgrace, despair, death? Oh! think how glorious a thing is life, and whether you care to live it well, before you toy with what has ended so many grand careers in infamy!

"Oh, thou invisible spirit of wine, if thou hast no name to be known by, let us call thee A PARSON'S DAUGHTER."

ENJOYED TROUBLES.

HAVE you never heard of persons saying, "What troubles I do enjoy," and "What poor health I enjoy"? I used to think they had made a mistake in the word "enjoy," and meant "endure," but I have disabused myself of such a foolish notion. Some people do really enjoy their troubles—they hug them closely to their hearts—they would hate to be deprived of them, for then they would have nothing to talk about or comment upon. They seem to take an intense delight in but-ton-holing their neighbors and pouring into their ears all the sorrows, troubles and afflictions which have visited them from the day of their birth up to the present time. If they could stop there, we might hope for patience, but they cannot stop at that point. You wonder what more they can have to tell. Bless your unsophisticated hearts, haven't they kept in reserve all the troubles they expect to have in the future? I could tell them one thing: if they do enjoy their grievances, I desire that they enjoy them in solitude, but please don't afflict me with a recital of them. I read of too much misery through the medium of the press, and such food is not very palatable.

No one can feel more for the sufferings of her fellow-beings than Eve, but she doesn't

think it right to burden others with one's woes when they cannot be remedied by so doing.

These individuals who enjoy their troubles are too apt to visit their really suffering neighbors, ostensibly for the purpose of cheering them up. The cheering-up process is rather a doleful one, something after the following pattern: "Bless me, Mrs. Jones, how ill you are looking, to be sure! Worrying yourself out, no doubt, thinking where your son spends so much of his time. I have heard folks say he plays billiards a great deal. I don't know as billiards themselves do so much harm, because I have heard that ministers play them, and the surroundings are what bring the harm. Drinking saloons are in close proximity to billiard-rooms, and everybody knows what temptation strong drink is to a young man. I suppose you do hope that your son won't be brought home on a shutter like Mrs. Thomas' boy was. He had the delirium tremens and died in one of his drunken fits. I hope the case won't turn out so bad with your son. But there's never any knowing what may happen. Sorrows come when we least expect them. It is always best to be prepared, for we must all have some troubles to enjoy. It does sometimes seem to me I have more troubles than I can possibly enjoy. The only way I get along at all is to forget my own and think of others. Yes, I am not so callous-hearted but what I can go and cheer up an afflicted neighbor."

How cheering such beings are! How comforting are their suggestions! Doesn't one feel braver to battle with the world's troubles after listening to such enervating talk?

Sympathy for one's sufferings is an entirely different thing from endeavoring to make them more burdensome to bear. I wouldn't go into a sick-room and sing, "Hark, from the tombs a doleful sound," I don't believe in such medicine, for it has never saved one in individual from the grave; it has most likely sent more there. A sick person wants to be enlivened, and not depressed. He wants to forget his sufferings, and not be reminded of them. If he cannot live, and is aware of the fact, isn't it better to picture to his mind the beauties of a heaven where everything is pure, bright and sunny, than talk of the grave as a dark, dismal home, and the river of death a dreary one to cross? Will not our loved ones love us the more? Will the thoughts of parting be so keen?

You think sick people ought to be made aware how ill they are? Don't they know it themselves, and if not, is it going to make them any better by the knowledge?

You talk a person into misery by commenting on all the dire calamities you can think of, and then you wonder why people are sick. It is much the same as though you gave a person a dose of arsenic, and then wondered what caused his death. This enjoying your troubles so much is a sort of poison, and I wonder the regular physicians haven't told you this before.

It strikes me it is hard enough to be sick without burdening others with one's complaints, but perhaps it is easier to preach than to practice, and my opinion may go for naught. All I have to say is, if, when I am sick, you want to come and cheer me up, do so; but if you come with doleful looks and prate about the "troubles you do enjoy," then I am asleep and snoring, and don't wish to be disturbed.

EVE LAWLESS.

Foolscap Papers.

On Skates.

I HAD often gazed in admiration upon those who go down to the river on the ice and perform feats of the great deeps. I saw how very easy it was to skate. "All you have to do is to strike out with one foot this way, and with the other foot that way, and you go right along just as if the ice was greased."

Thus thought I, and then went and bought a pair of skates, which I fastened myself to, though all my corns and bunions violently opposed the performance.

Then I rose, but that rose didn't amount to anything; the skates attached to my feet slipped out from under me, as I had forgotten to rosin them. (Why do they make skates so slick?) I defy any man to maintain his equilibrium with both feet in the atmosphere. I went down to fast music to rest myself. I sat down to rest and study the planetary system. I had a fine view of the transit of Venus; the Aurora Borealis; the next comet; the five moons of Jupiter; the ring of Saturn; the eclipse of the sun, and my grandmother.

I sat there a long time, contemplating the star in the ice that marked my fall. It was so beautiful, with the prismatic colors of the rainbow radiating from a common center. I really never saw anything half so fine. I was spellbound.

Some foolish young folks laughed at me, but what souls had they for the beautiful in nature? They didn't seem to understand the nature of the case at all. I enjoyed it. What matter if I did think my backbone was shoved up into my neck? Science is always pursued under difficulties.

I then got up like the celebrated lame *Limbnia*. Some people might have objected to my get up, but it was the best get up I had; and then I found that the ice was a little too smooth. I don't like ice too slick. One foot started out in one direction, and the other in another. My legs not being long enough to allow both feet the full bent of their separate minds, I sat down between them to see if I could make another star like the first. I sat down as gently as possible—so gently that the works of my hundred-dollar watch came all to pieces; my neck was shortened an inch and a half; my plug had slipped down so far over my head that I could see out of the crown, which was removed for the occasion, and I almost regretted that the ice wasn't made of a softer nature, or that I did not provide myself with pillows before I started—but the star, it couldn't be beat. I had a notion to go and hire myself out as a pile-driver.

When I got tired of sitting there, I got up again. All the combined weakness of my body (a large amount) seemed to concentrate into my ankles. They would wobble. I couldn't see why they couldn't make skate-runners three or four inches thick, so a fellow could stand up easily, and rough on the edges, so they wouldn't slip so much.

When I was a boy, I used to skate, but I joined the temperance society, and grew out of such vain things.

I saw a fellow going by with the rolling step. That was the step for me, so I started out, and the second step I rolled and twenty-five feet. I did it so beautifully that I gained the applause of everybody on the ice. I had every facility for rolling, for there was nothing to hinder me in the least. I rolled into a crowd, and they all came down as nicely as a shelf-full of bottles when you are hunting for the camphor-bottle at night.

Everybody said I could not have done better if I had tried.

When they assured me that that was the way you had to begin to learn to skate, I felt a little better satisfied, and regained confidence.

I contemplated the poetry of motion which I saw around me, and resolved to go ahead a foot or two at least, wishing that I had a good stout fence to hold on to. I started out bravely. That is, gliding motion of the skates is seductive—easy, if you don't let them glide too much. After a few strokes I began to find it was easier to take both feet off the ice than to lift one. There is just where the trouble of gravitation comes in. I don't give Newton any credit for what he did, because he might have discovered something better while he was at it. This time I came down with so much avoidpounce that my head struck on the ice four times before I stopped bouncing, and then three men had to sit down on me to hold me quiet. I thought I had been fed on cherry-bounce for a month, and was seriously threatened with softening of the brain.

My head rung with all the malignancy of a late breakfast-bell, and the tears came up into my eyes like water through a hole in the ice. Yet I couldn't object to the ice being there so much, for if it hadn't been there, I should have gone into the water and been drowned; and have been totally unfit for any other purpose except a coroner to sit on.

My head was on the ice so much that I began to think I ought to wear my skates on it instead of on my feet.

My falls seemed to beat the Niagara Falls all hollow, being, of course, more stupendous and of a finer order.

One friend remarked that he never saw a fellow who had been brought up as well as I had been brought down so badly.

Another said if I was trying to learn to fall, he thought I would soon become a master in the art.

Utterly regardless of all the horrors that might have been in store for me, I ordered the skates removed, for I had come to the conclusion that a man in learning to skate was desperately in need of three or four pairs of good legs, and a very thick head; and vowing that I would never venture on the ice again unless I was padded all over with straw (and then I wouldn't go near it), I went home and to bed, where my address is at present.

The doctor thinks he can remodel my shattered frame, or at least mend me up so as to be recognized by my most familiar creditors, if I have patience and money enough.

WASHINGTON WHITEHORN.

Woman's World.

SPRING NOVELTIES AND CHANGES.

OUR stores have had their "openings," and we now know what are the new styles of Spring costumes and the favorite goods for the season. We may therefore report that the latest color in fashion is white, which is simple and becoming to all. White is suitable for the elegant as well as the plainest toilet, and is becoming with field-flowers as with diamonds; and as appropriate to blondes as to brunettes.

The system of Bulgare plaits is used for nearly all full-dress toilets. We term it "system" because the Bulgare plait is subject to so many different forms, that very often there is nothing left of it but the original idea, which was to attract attention to the middle of the skirt behind. Sometimes this famous plait is of a different material to the remainder of the dress, and forms the train; sometimes it is plain, sometimes and oftentimes shirred; occasionally it is made projecting, and occasionally again in hollow plaits.

A beautiful reception dress is made of black faille, and worn on the front; at the back the waist is independent of the skirt. The middle of the back is of scarlet faille; it is plaited, and all the way down the neck to the end of the basque are black ribbon bows; the sides of the waist are of black faille; all these are joined and form a basque of medium length. The sleeves are of black faille as far down as the elbow, where there is a puffing of scarlet faille; the bottom is in the form of a gauntlet, and is made of black faille worked with black jet beads. The back of the skirt is made altogether of scarlet faille fastened to the sides of the Princess dress by three scarfs of black ribbon joined together under black ribbon loops and ends. The bottom of the train is of black faille, worked with jet beads; the upper part is cut out in large points; these lapping over the scarlet faille have a very pretty effect. Ruchings of crepe tisse are on the outside of the sleeves.

A visiting dress may be made with an underskirt of black faille, perfectly plain at the back, and having in front as far as the apron small flounces placed in the rounded apron form. The apron is in black sciennne, with lengthwise bands of galloon, worked with jet beads placed short distances apart; it is surrounded with a corresponding fringe; at back of this apron is a sash with fringed ends. The black sciennne waist has also lengthwise beaded bands of galloon, and is bordered with beaded fringe. It has a black velvet standing-collar at the back, which forms a revers in front, under which is a square piece of black faille. The sleeves are of black faille with bias shirtings, and are finished at the wrist with a double cuff, on the outside of which there are loops and ends. The waist and apron of this toilet can also be made of beaded lace, placed over a lining of black silk.

A half mourning reception dress can be made of black and white faille, and trimmed with Chantilly lace, and white faille ribbon. The long train skirt is mounted in a Bulgare plait; the middle of this is trimmed with bows of white faille ribbon, grouped in a shell-shaped trimming of Chantilly lace. The apron is of white faille, and is draped in groups of three small plaits; it is bordered by a shirred flounce with ruched heading. A wide piece of Chantilly lace forms a flat, shell-shaped trimming at the side of the apron; this trimming is fastened down by bunches of white pinks, with black beaded leaves. Two pieces of white lace (Malines) placed head to head on the black faille trim the other side of the apron; a garland of white pinks and beaded leaves runs through the middle of the lace. The corsage is in the Louis XV. form, and made of black faille, with long points behind, and lacing at the back. The front of the corsage is of white faille; two pieces of lace slightly fulled together are taken up on the corsage, to form a collar in the neck. The sleeves short, and made of white faille trimmed with white and black lace; a bouquet of white pinks, with beaded, black leaves are placed at the angle of the waist.

These, of course, are the dresses of "our first circles"—expensive and not to be copied by people of small means, yet people of small means like to know what is the style even though they may not be able to adopt it, so we give the notes as a matter of interest rather than as items for practical use. Such items we will submit in a future number.

Readers and Contributors.

TO CORRESPONDENTS AND AUTHORS.—No MSS. received that are not fully prepaid in postage.—No MSS. reserved for future orders.—Unavailable MSS. promptly returned only when stamps accompany the inclosures, for such returns.—No correspondence of any nature is permissible in a package marked as "Book MSS."—MSS. which are imperfect are not used or wanted. In all cases our choice rests first upon merit or fitness; second, upon exactness of MS. as a "copy"; third, length. Of two MSS. of equal merit we always prefer the shorter.—Never write on both sides of a sheet. Use Commercial Note size paper as most convenient to editor and compositor, bearing off each page as it is written, and carefully giving it the full page number.—A rejection by us means implies a want of merit. Many MSS. unsuitable to us are well worthy of use.—All experienced and popular writers will find an ever ready to give their offerings early attention.—Contributors must look to this column for all information in regard to contributions. We can not write letters except in special cases.

We have to decline "How Pete Was Sold," "Broken Livestock," "Boy Heron," "Allice Hinkley," "Too Late," "A Look of Hair," "To Mrs. Adeline Myers," "The Magic Circle," "Miss Bouncely's Little Theft," "Major Dick's Duel," "A Race on Legs," "Rafting on the Sabine," "Onchich's Vow."

These contributions we place on accepted list: "What Frightened Bob Carter?," "Inside-out," "An After-night's Romance," "The Three Penitents," "Old Zebra's Exploit."

BRACE-UP. Sailors' wages are about \$30 per month of coastwise service.

JOE JOY, JR. We should say that Joe Joy, Jr., was very much of a married man.

ASSEN. Transit of Venus observations are not to be "published," in the popular sense.

HOBBART TOWN. Clipper ships only run from New York to Australia direct.

RACHEL. Take grease out of the floor by using sal soda in the scrubbing water.

OBESON. Masks are of all prices, from ten cents to ten dollars.

BRADLY H. Artificial ice can be manufactured in any quantity, at a cost of about one cent a pound.

N. G. G. The king of the Sandwich Islands is not a "nigger," but a native Sandwich-Islander.

PHILIP W. Capt. Mayne Reid's stories for this paper are not published in book form, except the "Headless Horseman."

J. R. M. No stamps inclosed for return of MS. We do not care to see the serials inclosed.

F. S. F. Chas. E. Lasalle is the author of the Dime Novel, "Green Ranger of the Scioto."

OUR BULL'S-EYE. Dashing Dick is contained in seven numbers—forty cents.

FRED. F. S. Can't use MS. It is evidently by an inexperienced hand. MS. might do for some local paper. Make your first efforts at home, and thus "get your hand in."

W. J. B. See directions at head of this column. Where manuscripts are imperfect, as compositions, we do not care to be bothered with them. We have too many perfect manuscripts offered to make it necessary to revise imperfect work in order to make it available.

ETNE P. O. Sick headache usually is caused by disordered stomach; hence its treatment is to correct the cause.—There is no remedy for mildly tacked. Kilo-drying does not restore its aroma or strength.

READER, Racine. To learn "short-hand" writing is a matter of long experience. We know of no school which teaches it as a specialty.—Our artists do not draw their designs on paper, but upon the wood on which it is to be engraved.

L. W. and Y. E. We already have several times answered your first query.—There are several books on "Composition," but not one of them is available to an uneducated person. All presuppose a knowledge of grammar.

IGNORAMUS. A name can be changed before marriage. Middle names are changed after marriage. A man is known legally by the name he has used legally, and that usually is the name given by the parents at christening, or which they have entered on the birth record.

J. W. Y. Withered flowers when almost dead can be revived, and will remain fresh for a long time by putting the stems in boiling water.

ALBERT D. Eggs are as nutritious as meat, for one-third of their weight is solid nutriment. Eggs are best when cooked four minutes; make a sandwich of egg and home bread and you will find it very nutritious and wholesome as well as palatable.

MIXER. Fifteen per cent of all the gold dug from the gold mines of the United States is manufactured at home, while thirty per cent goes to Europe, twenty per cent to Cuba, fifteen per cent to Brazil, five per cent to China, and the balance, and the balance cannot be traced, as it remains in the hands of private parties.

CLICK-CLACK. The best trotters so far are not thoroughbreds, but the nearer they are to that strain the better they have done so far. We see no reason why the time may not come when the best trotters will be thoroughbred, able to trot in two minutes. Fifty years have done more for them than that.

ALFRED wants to know what kind of weather is best for fishing? Generally speaking, dark weather. If the water is muddy the fish will bite on a bright day. A bait, gently dropped down to the bottom, will generally bring out a lurking fish in a bright day. Warm, cloudy weather makes fish bite anywhere. In rain they are very apt to bite under a bridge or an anchored ship. A sudden shower of rain as much as if it wet them. Why this should be so we know not, but so it is.

PENFIELD. Plover and curlew are similar birds. The curlew has a long, slender bill, and a straight one. In looks and habits they are a sort of link between the quail and the snipe, the head and legs and bill being about half-way between the two. The golden plover arrives in the west just after the snipe, keeps out on the prairies, and is very wild and wary, though numerous. The only way to shoot plover is to draw a flock in a buggy, then suddenly pull up, pick up a hidden gun, and let fly at the flock. On foot you cannot get within shot.

FARMER. Quails and grouse do not injure your crops. They eat a little grain, but generally only what is scattered about. They are not very much, mainly insectivorous, and kill enough worms and grasshoppers while the wheat is in the blade to pay for any subsequent damage a thousand-fold. You and all your class, if you had sense to see it, are directly interested in making and keeping strict game laws, to keep the game birds from the extermination that awaits them in the absence of game laws. All the sportsmen in America cannot hurt them materially by shooting at full-grown birds, but young birds and nests should be protected for their own benefit.

FARMER'S WIFE. It is said that charcoal will fatten fowls and at the same time give the meat improved tenderness and flavor. Pulverize and mix with the food. A turkey requires about a gill a day.

STOREKEEPER. We condense for your benefit the following valuable hints on what you need. You will find them reliable and useful: 1st. A strong solution of sulphate of magnesia (epsom salts) given a beautiful quality to whitewash. 2d. Glass can be drilled with a foot moistened with dilute sulphuric acid. This is better than turpentine. 3d. The best way to avoid water pipes freezing and bursting is to have a cock in the cellar, by which the water can be turned off for the entire house. 4th. Paraffin is the best material for protecting polished steel or iron from rust. 5th. Linings may be made waterproof by plunging first in a solution containing 30 per cent soap, and afterward in another solution containing the same percentage of copper. Wash afterward.

JAKE PAINTPO. As to the proportion of letters in signs, and marking, the following you will find an excellent guide: Suppose the height of the capital letters to be ten, the widths are as follows: B, P, T, ten; A, C, D, E, G, H, K, N, O, Q, R, T, V, X, and Y, eleven; I, five; J, eight; S and L, nine; M and W, seventeen; Z and 8, twelve. Numerals: 1 equals five; 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, nine; 4, eleven; 6, 9, 10, ten. Lower case letters (height six and a half): Width: a, b, d, p, q, x and z, seven and a half; c, e, o, s, seven; f, j, l, t, three; g, h, n, u, eight; m, three; r, y, six; w, ten.

VILLA asks: "How can I make a good concrete walk in the country, where skilled help is not available, and it costs too much to send for everything to the city?" Dig away the soil to a depth of about five inches, then lay a bottom of pebbles, ramming them well down with a paving rammer. Sweep them off as clean as possible with a broom, and cover the surface thinly with hot coal tar. Now put on a coat of smaller gravel (the first bed of pebbles should

THE CAPTIVE'S PLEA.

BY L. C. GREENWOOD.

Cast aside these rusty fetters
Which long years have rudely bound me;
I can bear their weight no longer,
Nor these dismal walls around me.

Give me air, not moldy vapors,
If my wrecked life I must sustain;
Let not my days be slowly wasted
Beneath the power these walls maintain.

How it haunts me, how I startle
At the bell's deep midnight tolling,
Yester night while sleeping, dreaming,
As the hours so swift were rolling.

Yester night on couch laid lowly,
As the night grew stiller, stiller,
When it tolled the hour of midnight
Seemed to shake each chained pillar.

Seemed to shake each bar of iron
Of yonder massive prison door,
And a spirit whispered, "Freedom,
For freedom I had hoped no more."

Oh, that word it so enthralled me,
And set my sluggish blood on fire,
Armed with a thousand weapons
From fate's abyss uprose mine ire.

And methought I fought for freedom,
Shedding blood of each oppressor;
Till at last in realm all beautiful,
I of freedom was possessor.

And the glorious sun, I hailed it
As erst in childhood's glowing glees,
And each ray a blessing showered
Upon my head, for I was free.

I was free, as mountain streamlets
That wind their way and purring fall,
Free, as highest soaring eagles,
In freedom I rejoiced with all.

In the dust this chain I trampled,
Then bidding every link decay,
And an amon, whispered softly,
Ere I in gladness turned away.

While exultant in my triumph
I defied the law's high power,
Oh, how painful from the turret
Pealed the morn's awakening hour.

And my dream was turned to ashes,
Left, was not a gleaming ember;
Drear and chill my cell I found it,
As are nights in cold December.

And I trembling gasped and shuddered
At the dread clanking of my chain,
As its rusty tongue spoke hoarsely,
Saying, "Dream-born hopes are vain."

Was this dream an evil omen,
Come thus to taunt me ere I die?
Showing me the sweetest freedom,
For which no one has pined as I.

If in vain I am imploring,
Still my weak words have had their vent;
If my chains cannot be broken,
I wait a higher power intent.

The Rival Brothers.

OR, THE WRONGED WIFE'S HATE.

BY MRS. MAY AGNES FLEMING,
AUTHOR OF "THE DARK SECRET," "AWFUL
MYSTERY," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE END OF THE PATE.

PROFESSOR CLAUDE D'ARVILLE stood leaning against the trunk of a giant pine, whose long arms cast giant shadows on the sunny sward, watching with dreamy, half-closed eyes the picture before him. He looked like an artist, this dark-eyed, thoughtful-browed, classical-featured young Canadian, and he looked what he was—an artist heart and soul. It was a study for an artist, too—the scene on which he gazed—and in after years that very scene, immortalized on canvas and exhibited at the Academy of Art, in London, was one of the first of his paintings to win him fame. The cloudless summer sky over his head, fleeced with billows of downy white, and away in the West, where the sun was sinking, an orriforme of purple, gold and crimson, the whole western horizon radiant with rosy light. The pines, the tamaracs, and maples reared their tall heads against it; its vivid glory of coloring glittering on their green leaves, as their branches rustled softly in the light breeze, and cast long cool shadows on the grass. The twittering of the not very sweet-voiced but gaudy-colored Canadian birds, the plashing of a fountain near, the crisp chirping of the grasshoppers at his feet, made an undercurrent of melody of their own, audible even above the crashing of the brass-band, and the shouting and vociferous talking and laughing of the emancipated schoolgirls. The pine-tree beside which he stood was an eminence commanding a view of the whole grounds, with its glens and walks, and summer-houses, and cascades, and parterres, and broad lawns, and sloping glades. Up and down these shaded walks the white muslin skirts and black ribbons of the pensionnaires fluttered beside the black dress-coats of Louis Schaffer's fellow-students from one of the Montreal colleges. Kate Schaffer had said there would be half a dozen gentlemen at the fete; had she said two dozen, she would have been nearer the mark; but, not being a prophetess, how was she to tell her irrepressible brother intended inviting half his classmates?

On the lawn, some were dancing; among the trees, some were swinging; groups were seated together on the grass having sociable chats; white muslin and black coats turning and twisting everywhere; and the band under the tamaracs still playing "Vive la Canadienne!"

Professor D'Arville saw all this, and something else too. Three of those white-muslin angels were coming toward him. One, a plump little damsel, with cheeks like scarlet rose-berries, brown eyes, brown braids, and azure ribbons; one, a gipsy-faced, dashing young, brunette daughter of the land, and queen of the fete; and the third, who walked in the center, swinging her straw hat by its rosy ribbons, her black curls entwined with crimson geranium-blossoms and deep-green leaves.

Ah, Professor D'Arville! artist and beauty-worshiper, is there anything in all you see before you as fair as she? No Canadian, though her eyes are like black stars, and those ringlets of jetty darkness, that delicate complexion and bright bloom of color belong to another land. Look as long as you please on the beauty of sky and earth, or tree and flowers, it is not half so dangerous as one glance at that noble and lovely head.

"Vive la Canadienne! et ses beaux yeux,
Et ses beaux yeux tous doux,
Et ses beaux yeux,"

hummed a voice behind him; and turning his lazy glance, Monsieur D'Arville saw Paul Schaffer lounging up, looking at the three girls, too.

He touched his hat, with a meaning smile, to the young artist.

"I need not ask if monsieur is enjoying himself. I see that he is."

"Yes, monsieur; solitude is enjoyment sometimes."

"Pardon, that I have broken it; but it was likely to be broken anyway, in a pleasant manner, perhaps. See! The three belles of the fete are coming toward you."

"They are going to the house, I presume; for they have not even seen me yet."

"Monsieur's modesty! He does not need to be told he is a favorite with the ladies!"

Professor D'Arville fixed his eyes in a steady stare on Mr. Schaffer's face, in a way that would have discomposened any other man, but did not in the least disturb the bland equanimity of the young gentleman before him.

"A deuced pretty girl, that Miss Eve Hazelwood! Don't you think so, monsieur? One of your pupils, too, no doubt. What an enviable fate is yours!"

The brow of the young professor contracted slightly; but his only answer was silence, cold and haughty.

"They call her La Princesse in the school," went on easy Mr. Schaffer, "and, by Jove, she looks it! Talk about the *beaux yeux* of our Canadian girls! I never saw such a pair of eyes in my life as mademoiselle has!"

"Is monsieur in love?" Professor D'Arville asked, with a slight smile and French shrug.

"I would be, if I dared; but one might as well fall in love with the moon, if all I have heard of her be true. I like flesh and blood, not statues. One live woman is worth a thousand marble ones."

Professor D'Arville made a gesture toward Hazel, who was laughing at something until her cheeks were crimson.

"If monsieur likes flesh and blood, he has it there. The future Madame Schaffer—is it not?"

"Will you have a cigar, monsieur?" was Paul Schaffer's answer. "No! Then, with your permission, I will."

"Why, here's Paul!" called out Kate, catching sight of the two gentlemen. "I say, Paul, Louis told me to tell you—"

What Louis had told her to tell, Mr. Paul Schaffer was not destined to hear; for, just then, there was a tremendous shout, and Louis himself came bustling through the trees, his hair flying, his face flushed—altogether, in a state of frenzied excitement.

"This way—this way, all of you! Here's a lot more of the crowd, and we'll have our fortunes told together!"

"Mon Dieu! that madhead gone crazy?" was Kate's cry, while the rest stared.

"Gone crazy? Catch me at it! Here, you old Meg Merrilies, or whatever they call you, come this way! Here's another batch that want you to space their fortunes."

Half a dozen girls and as many young men, with a vast deal of noise and tumult, and in their midst an outlandish-looking figure. It was an old woman, bent, and leaning on a stick; her brown, shriveled face and small, bright eyes peering from beneath a huge bonnet; a dingy blue cloak wrapped about her, and beneath it a scant red dress hardly reaching to her ankle. A more uncouth or witch-like figure no one there had ever seen; and Louis, catching her by the arm, drew her forward, and presented her with a flourishing bow.

"One of Macbeth's witches, ladies and gentlemen, come from Hades by the last express-train, to tell your fortunes! She has told all of ours, and made fifteen shillings by the performance; and now, if you have any spare change about you, she is willing to lift the veil of the future for you. Eve, hold out your hand, and let us hear what the future has in store for you besides a coffin!"

"No!" said Eve, shrinking back. "Let Kate and Hazel try, if they wish; I had rather not."

The old woman, whose eyes had been darting from one face to another, turned them, at the sound of her voice, on Eve, and, to the surprise of every one, broke out into a shrill and irrepressible cry. It was not a cry of astonishment; it was more like triumph, repressed almost instantly; but her eyes gleamed with a strange fire, and the dirty, skinny hand she held out trembled with eagerness.

"Yes, yes, yes, my pretty lady!" she exclaimed, shrilly; "let me tell your fortune! Don't be afraid, my dearie; the future can have nothing but good in it for one so beautiful as you."

Her first cry had been repressed so quickly that it had passed almost unnoticed, save by one, who bent his brows and watched the beladame keenly.

Eve shrunk further away.

"No; don't trouble yourself about my future. I dare say, I will know it soon enough."

"Oh, botheration!" broke out Louis; "don't be such a guy, Eve! Let the old girl tell your fortune. She does it strong, I tell you!"

"No," said Eve, resolutely turning away. "I shall not tempt the future, even in jest. Besides"—half laughing—"I have no money, and the oracle is a golden glutton, and will not speak unless bribed."

A storm of wordy abuse fell unheeded on Eve's ear as she turned away; and, lifting her eyes, she caught Professor D'Arville's penetrating glance fixed upon her.

"So you have no faith in destiny?"

"I do not believe in fortune-telling, if that is what you mean; and I believe it is wrong to encourage any one to make a living by any such means."

The professor smiled, and the smile lit up his dark, creole face with a rare beauty.

"Wisdom from the lips of sixteen! You see, I know your age, mademoiselle. I know beforehand you had considerable moral courage, but I did not know it was quite so strong."

"Monsieur pays me a compliment," Eve said, her heart fluttering a little. "I assure you, I can be obstinate enough when I please! Are you going up to the house?"

"If mademoiselle will permit me to accompany her."

Eve bowed, and Professor D'Arville offered his arm. A dark and sinister glance followed them; and Louis Schaffer touched Hazel on the arm, with a slight and contemptuous laugh.

"See, Hazel! One would think they had known each other from their cradles. Paul and Virginia, eh?"

"They make a very nice couple, I think. How do you like Eve?"

Mr. Schaffer raised his eyebrows.

"Oh, so-so. A pretty girl with black eyes, but nothing to set the St. Lawrence on fire. She is a sort of second Minerva, is she not? In making her, they forgot to add that trifling item, a heart."

"Nonsense, Paul! But Hazel's face was radiant *malgré cela*. 'I won't have you talk so of my handsome cousin Eve!'"

"My dear, I beg your pardon. You asked my opinion, and you have it."

"But every one admires her."

"And so do I, immensely—as I admire sculptured Dianas and Niobes. But as to falling in love with anything so celestially cold—bah!"

"Oh, Paul!"—and Hazel's hands clasped his arm, and Hazel's beaming face was uplifted in ecstasy—"I am glad; I am so glad! Do you know I was awfully afraid you would never think of me after you saw Eve!"

"You're a little simpleton, Hazel. Do you know that? And, to punish you, I have a good mind not to tell you something that I think would please you."

"What is it, Paul?"

"Come up to the house; I don't want all these gaping girls to hear. It is this: the regiment are ordered off somewhere, and, before they go, give a grand ball. Will you come?"

"Oh, Paul, I can't!"

"Well, *mon amour*?"

"I wouldn't—laughing and blushing deeply; it wouldn't be proper!"

"Tut, tut, tut, proper! Are you not my little wife, or as good? Get a companion if you like; ask La Princesse to come with you!"

"Eve?" Hazel cried, aghast; "why, Paul, Eve would as soon take a pistol and blow her own brains out as do anything of the kind! Eve, indeed! It's little you know of her to suggest such a thing!"

"Try, anyway. If she refuses, Kate Schaffer won't, and she can go with Louis. *Mal peste!* How I hate prudes!"

After that, Hazel would as soon have thought of blowing her brains out as refusing, and they had it all settled before they reached the house. Some one was singing as they entered the long drawing-room, half filled with eager listeners; and among these listeners a white figure, with black curls and pink ribbons, in the shadow of the window-curtains, drinking in every word—every note. The singer was Professor Claude D'Arville, who could sing and play as well as he could paint, and the song was "Ellen Adair."

Paul Schaffer and Hazel Wood stood in the doorway, and listened with the rest:

"Ellen Adair, she loved me well,
Against her father and mother's will,
To-day I sat for an hour and wept,
By Ellen's grave on the windy hill."

"She was, and I thought her cold—
Thought her proud, and did o'er her sea;
Filled was I with folly and spite,
When Ellen Adair was dying for me."

"There is the Ellen Adair he is thinking of," whispered Paul; "look at the window; but she never will die for him or any one else."

"Ah! I don't know," said Hazel, with a sentimental look; "the trail of the serpent is over all," Moore says, and she is only mortal, like the rest of us."

"Marble, you should say! There, he is at the second verse, and it is not polite to talk, I suppose."

The song was finished amid a buzz of applause, in which the white figure at the window did not join. They saw her shrink away into the shadow of the curtains, and glide through the open window out on the lawn. The sinister eyes that never ceased watching her saw the act, and saw Professor D'Arville saunter away in another direction.

The sunny afternoon was ending in a cloudless, moonlight night, as Eve Hazelwood, avoiding the numerous groups of gay girls and young men, strolled by herself down a shady pine avenue, toward the gate, and leaning against it, watched the round, red moon rise, with her beauty in her eyes. Far off, one solemn star shone, the precursor of the rising host. The peaceful village lay beneath her, hushed in the holy silence of eventide; the convent-bell was ringing for vespers, and while she stood listening to its slow, sweet music, two of the nuns passed her on their way there. One was a sober-looking, middle-aged woman, the other, a young girl, not much older than Eve herself, and with a face almost as beautiful and fair, more gentle and sweet. Eve watched them out of sight, wondering if the young nun was happy, and very, very doubtful of it. She need not have been. Sister Agnes was perfectly happy; but the world looked a very bright and beautiful place to the inexperienced schoolgirl, and, somehow, this afternoon it had acquired a new charm. Had she ever spent such a pleasant afternoon? And was there ever so charming a song as "Ellen Adair?" Ah! there lay the key-note of all, and half unconsciously she began to sing:

"Love may come and love may go,
And fly like a bird from tree to tree;
But I will love no more, no more,
Till Ellen Adair comes back to me."

"You liked my song, then?" said a quiet voice behind her, and Eve fairly bounded. She had heard no step on the velvet sward, but Professor D'Arville stood at her elbow.

"Pardon, mademoiselle! I did not mean to startle you. Being tired of the heat and noise of the house, I strolled down here to enjoy the beauty of the evening alone. I see mademoiselle is an admirer of the beauties of nature, too. If I intrude, I will depart."

"Oh, no," said Eve, laying her hand on her breast to still her startled heart-beating; "this place is free to all."

He leaned against the gate and looked at her.

"So you like 'Ellen Adair'?"

"Yes, monsieur; I like everything Tennyson writes."

"Yet it is rubbish after all—sentimental trash! Don't you think so?"

"No, monsieur! I rather indignantly; 'I should be sorry to think so! Tennyson could not write rubbish if he tried.'"

"Oh, I see! You are like all the other romantic young ladies in the world! Have you read 'Mariana in the Moated Grange'?"

"A hundred times, monsieur! I know it every word off."

"What lucky fellows these poets are! Ah, who have we here? A brigand or the hero of a three-volume novel. Perhaps Tennyson himself."

Eve's eyes were asking the same question, though her lips were silent. Up the moonlight road a tall figure was striding—the figure of a man in a long, picturesque and most foreign-looking cloak, a broad-brimmed straw hat pulled over his face, completely concealing it, and a cigar between his lips.

"What a strange-looking figure!" said Eve, wondering. "Who can he be, and what can have brought him to St. Croix?"

"Questions I cannot take it upon myself to answer. Why, he is actually coming here!"

The foreign-looking stranger had caught sight of the two figures standing within the gate, and flinging his cigar away, walked up to them. Taking off his hat to Eve, he made a courtesy bow; and in the moonlight, clear as day, she saw a bronzed and muscled face, swarthy as that of a Paynim, but eminently handsome, shaded by profuse coal-black locks, and lit up by luminous dark eyes. Dark, handsome, and distinguished, he did indeed look like the hero of a novel, or a brigand in a play. His years might have been forty, and there were threads of silver gleaming amid his dark locks.

"Pardon!" he said in French, though not with a French accent, "for the intrusion, but I am a stranger here. Can you tell me which of those two buildings on the hill yonder is Madame Moreau's *pensionnat*?"

"The one furthest off, monsieur," replied Professor D'Arville; "the other is the Convent of the Holy Cross."

"A thousand thanks, monsieur! Good-night."

He bowed again to Eve, threw on his sombrero, and walked leisurely away, humming the tag-end of a Spanish ballad as he went.

"A Spaniard," said Monsieur D'Arville; "he looks like it. Some of Madame's Cuban friends, perhaps; she lived there before she came to St. Croix. But the night-air is chill, and your dress is thin, mademoiselle—had I not better lead you in?"

"Eve! Eve! Eve! Hazelwood!" a chorus of voices suddenly called before Eve could reply, and a whole troop of demoiselles rushed down upon them. "Eve! Eve! where are you?"

"Here she is!" shouted Kate Schaffer. "I have found her! I thought I would."

And her black Canadian eyes, those laughing, roguish dark eyes, whose praises her countrymen sang, looked wickedly down teacher to pupil.

"Well," said Eve, with infinite composure, "and now that I am found, what do you want with me?"

"Only this, the best of friends must part; and we are ordered home, or rather back to prison. You are the only missing lamb of the fold; and detachments have been sent out in every direction in search of you."

"Oh, yes!" said Hazel, joining in; "we thought somebody had run away with—out you! Hurry now, or you'll get a lecture as long as to-day and to-morrow."

The carriages were at the door, and the *pensionnaires*, cloaked and hooded, being packed into them by the devoted young collegians. Louis Schaffer, his cousin Paul, and Monsieur D'Arville, stood near one as Eve came out the last, and it was Paul Schaffer who advanced with extended hand, while Louis was chatting volubly with the girls already stowed within the vehicle, and the professor stood at a little distance, looking quietly on.

"We thought *La Princesse* was lost ten minutes ago, and were all in a state of distraction. Louis, get out of the way, will you, and let me assist Mademoiselle Hazelwood in."

"Off she goes!" cried Louis, as Eve, scarcely touching his cousin's hand, stepped lightly in; "the last, the brightest, the best! Good-night, Eve, and pleasant dreams—dream of me!"

"Adieu, mademoiselle," Paul Schaffer said, lifting her hand to his lips before she was aware; "I shall long remember this evening! Adieu, and *au revoir*!"

With an imperious gesture, the girl snatched her hand away, her cheeks flushing scarlet. Another gentleman stepped up to the carriage door, and shut it.

"Good-night, Miss Hazelwood," he said in English; "Good-night, young ladies all."

"Bon soir! bon soir, monsieur!" a chorus of voices called, and then the carriage rattled away, and the fete was ended.

The two young men, left alone in the moonlight, did not speak. Roving silently, they went their different ways, Professor D'Arville into the house to bid his hostess farewell, and Paul Schaffer walked at a brisk pace toward the gate. Out in the road, he walked rapidly toward the village, and stopped at last before a lonely-looking little hut, at the outskirts of St. Croix. He paused a moment to look at it, and the one full ray of light streaming from its curtained window, and then rapped gently at the door.

"This should be the place," he muttered to himself; "and if the old witch knows anything about the girl, I shall find it out before I leave, or my name's not Paul Schaffer."

CHAPTER XIV.

A TEMPEST IN A TEAPOT.

A RAINY afternoon in St. Croix—a dogged, determined, out-and-out rainy day, with a sky of lead above, and a soaking, steaming, sodden earth below. A dreary afternoon in St. Croix, dull at the best in the brightest sunshine, but doubly dull in wet weather, when you might walk in mud from one extremity of the village to the other without meeting a living thing, except, perhaps, some dragged, skulking dog, the outcast and forlorn of his tribe. A dismal afternoon in the *pensionnat des demoiselles*; its playground deserted, its day-scholars gone home in the great covered carryall, kept by Madame for such emergencies, and darkness and dullness brooding over its empty *corres* and long corridors. It was the hour of recess, too; but the gloomy evening seemed to have imparted some of its gloom to Madame Moreau's pupils; for instead of making day hideous with their uproar, according to custom, they had slouched off to their rooms and gone to sleep, or in hidden corners were poring over novels, or gathered in groups, were gapefully discussing the great Schaffer fete, not yet two days old. The babies of the Fourth Division, too young in the blessedness of seven years to know the meaning of the dreadful word *ennui*, were romping and screaming in their own dominions, and their noise, and that of two or three pianos in the music-room, were the only sounds that broke the solitude of the *pensionnat*.

In one of the deserted *corres*, perched up in the deep window-ledge at the furthest extremity, a *pensionnaire* sat looking out at the black and dismal prospect. She was wrapped in a large plaid shawl, for the wet day was bleak and raw; a book, *La Tour de ma Chambre*, lay in her lap; but the dark, dreamy eyes were fixed on the lowering sky, and the rain plashing against the glasses, and the luxuriant black ringlets were pushed impatiently behind her ears, and away from the beautiful face. The girl was thinking, something schoolgirlish are not greatly given to do, and her meditations were broken suddenly, in a not very romantic manner. A pair of high-heeled boots came clattering down the staircase near her, and a shrill falsetto voice, singing at the top of a pair of powerful lungs:

"Oh, poor Robinson Crusoe!
How could you go for to do so!
Hey diddle diddle, the cat and the fiddle,
Oh, poor Robinson Crusoe!
He had a man Friday,
To keep his house tidy."

Hallo! Is this where you are, perched up like some dismal old owl, or some what's-its-name, a pillow-case in the wilderness?"

This last did not belong to the canticle she was chanting, but was addressed by the singer to the pensive young lady in the window, who turned round leisurely at the interruption.

"Is it you, Hazel?" What do you want?"

"He built him a boat,
Of the skin of a goat,
And he christened it Robinson Crusoe,"

sung Hazel Wood, skipping up adroitly beside Eve; "you ought to have been Mrs. Robinson Crusoe. You would have made a sweet pair of pokes, you would. What do I want? The pleasure of your charming society, my love. It's a little better than yawning myself to death up-stairs."

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"We thought *La Princesse* was lost ten minutes ago, and were all in a state of distraction. Louis, get out of the way, will you, and let me assist Mademoiselle Hazelwood in."

"Off she goes!" cried Louis, as Eve, scarcely touching his cousin's hand, stepped lightly in; "the last, the brightest, the best! Good-night, Eve, and pleasant dreams—

Hazel dried her eyes, and took her lacerated heart down-stairs, to seek consolation in the pale, lukewarm fluid, known in boarding-schools as tea, and its accompanying slices of transparent bread and butter. Fifteen minutes was the time allotted for devouring these dainties. At the end of that period, a signal was given to rise; grace was said by the presiding teacher, and the ceremony was over. Silence being the anstere law at meal-time, ten minutes were allowed the girls afterward to relieve their feelings before going up-stairs, and Babel broke loose the instant grace was ended. Just in the midst of a wild uproar and confusion of tongues, the folding-doors of the *salle a manger* split open, and in sailed Madame Moreau, followed by a gentleman, a tall, dark, foreign looking gentleman, bearded and mustached like a pard, and most exceedingly handsome.

"Here are my little family, monsieur," laughed Madame, introducing him to the pensionnaires, who returned his bow by a simultaneous school-girl obeisance. "You perceive they have just concluded their frugal repast."

"Frugal," murmured Kate Schaffer, looking mournfully round the sloppy tea-table. "I should think so. We are safe from dyspepsia and the gout while we are under your charge, madame."

The gentleman's dark eyes, wandering from face to face, rested on that of Eve, standing near a window, from which she had been watching the rainy twilight. He did not approach her, however, but went up to Hazel, who stood all alone, as sully as a bear.

"One of your family appears to be in distress, Madame," he said. And Eve recognized at once the melodious, foreign-accented voice. "The world seems to have gone wrong with this young lady."

Hazel shrugged pettishly, and turned round with a sully action, that said, as plainly as words:

"I wish you would mind your own business."

"You have been crying, Miss Wood?" questioned Madame, looking at her.

"No, I haven't," said Hazel, as crossly as she dared—for I am sorry to say Miss Wood thought no more of small fibs at times than she did of rudeness—"there's nothing the matter with me."

The stranger smiled, passed on, and came to where Eve stood.

"Ah," he said, stopping, "here is a familiar face." You and I have met before, mademoiselle."

"Met before!" echoed Madame, while all the teachers and pupils stared. "Why, where can Monsieur Ménez have met Miss Hazel-wood?"

"Madame, the other evening, walking along the road out there, I saw a fairy, all in white and pink, standing at a gate in the moonlight, and I went up, and asked to be directed to you."

"It was the night of the *fete*," Eve said, a little embarrassed to find all eyes fixed on her. "I directed Monsieur to the *pensionnat*."

Here the study-bell rang, and Madame and her companion bowing themselves out, left the young ladies to go up-stairs. Hermine the portress, was just opening the front-door in answer to an imperative ring, as her mistress crossed the vestibule on her way to the parlor. The visitor was a little spare, wiry man, who nodded to Madame with easy indifference, but started back at sight of her companion as if he had seen a ghast.

"Eh, what?" he cried, energetically, "it can't be! it can't be!"

And the sentence was finished by a blank stare.

"Monsieur evidently mistakes me for some one," said the gentleman, with a courteous smile and bow.

"No, that never was his voice," said the little man, still staring; "beg your pardon, sir, but you look so much like some one I once knew, that at first I'll be hanged if I didn't think it was he."

"Allow me to make you acquainted, gentlemen," interposed Madame, blandly; "Monsieur, this is Doctor Lance, one of my professors, and the guardian of two of my pupils. Professor, my friend from Cuba, Senor Ménez, who has kindly come to visit me in my Canadian home."

"Happy to make your acquaintance, sir," grunted the professor. "Madame, I want to see my wards—I have a piece of news for them, that I think will make them open their eyes."

"Madame led the way into the parlor, and rang the bell."

"No bad news, I trust?" she asked.

"That's as may be. The fact is, I'm tired of them, and I think it high time this tutor-guardian, who is also their nearest living blood-relation, should take charge of them. So I wrote to him. He was in England, as you know, and here (producing a document) is his answer, telling me to pack them both off by the next steamer to him."

"*Mon Dieu!* we shall be desolated at losing them. Babette," to the girl who answered the bell, "go tell Mrs. Mouselles Wood and Hazelwood that their guardian is here, and desires to see them immediately."

"Monsieur's wards are, then, the two young ladies I was speaking to?" asked Senor Ménez.

"Yes, monsieur, and the tall and handsome one is the star pupil of my school. Ah! how much we shall regret her! But I hear them coming; Monsieur Ménez, come this way, if you please. Monsieur Lance may desire to be alone with his wards."

The preceptress and her Cuban friend passed out just as Eve and Hazel, in a state of astonishment as to what Doctor Lance could possibly want at such a time, went in to hear the unexpected tidings.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 257.)

BAYARD TAYLOR, who has traveled all over the world, says that the favorite jugglers at the Japanese street-corners are young boys, who, before commencing their tricks, conceal their heads in large hoods, with a tuft of cock's feathers on top, and a small scarlet mask, representing the muzzle of a dog. The hood, mask and feathers rest above the head, while a kind of sack-like covering falls down, hiding head, neck and shoulders. "These poor children," he says, "in bending and curving themselves one upon the other, to the thump and jingle of their conductor's tambourine, present the appearance of a grotesque and fantastic struggle between two animals with monstrous heads and small human limbs." The conductors are grown men who go about with the boy-jugglers, and receive the money thrown by interested lookers-on. Their uncovered faces are sometimes hideous with the effort they make in singing and making noises to attract a crowd.

THE SOAP-MAN.

A Puny Tale.

BY TOM TRADDLES.

Sim Robb, he was a soap-man,
And when the panic came
He had no fear that he would fall
And lose his own good name.
For this one fact let all men know
Who would with others cope,
That Simona's trade will ever last,
For "While there's life there's soap."

And now to show the doubting world
That wonders never cease,
Although Sim never went abroad
He always trades in "grease."
And though Sim never told a fib,
Where'er he passes by,
And anybody gives him grease
He pays her back in "lye."

Sim never drank a glass of rum,
And yet it's stranger far
That though his friends petition oft
He never cuts the bar!
Though Job was troubled much with boils,
Not so with Simona Robb;
And when he turns his grease to soap,
It is a "boiling job."

Old Bull's-Eye,

THE LIGHTNING SHOT OF THE PLAINS:

BY JOSEPH E. BADGER, JR.

CHAPTER XVIII.

BURIED ALIVE.

ANITA DE SYLVA uttered a little shriek of terror as the maddened beast crouched before her, its eyes ablaze, its long fangs visible through its parted lips, and when Shkote-nah, the Cayuga chief, pushed her back, she turned to flee, running fairly into the arms of Percy Abbot, who had sprung to her rescue. Leaving the giant to cope with the jaguar as best he might, Abbot raised Anita in his arms and clambered rapidly up the rocks, calling upon Luis to follow them. He now fully comprehended the double peril that threatened them, and sought refuge in a hollow between two upright rocks, with a roof of solid earth above. This hole was considerably larger than had seemed from the ledge below, and Luis found no difficulty in following the lovers. And then—the living avalanche thundered down the rocky sides of the barranca. The trio huddled close together, as though for mutual protection.

A livid light filled the barranca without. They could catch glimpses of dark bodies falling swiftly past the entrance—but then all was dark. There came a sudden shock—the sides of the den seemed to be falling in upon and crushing them. With a low moan, Anita swooned. Luis, who was nearest the entrance, groped forward, but only for a few feet. Then he paused, with a cry that sounded in Abbot's ears like a death knell. He easily understood its meaning.

They were buried alive! Truly the situation was anything but an enviable one. And yet, how much worse it might have been. Here at least they could not be crushed to death by the falling boulders, nor were they so fully exposed to the power of the fire. True, the air was close, and appeared scant, but if they were to be smothered to death, they would die together, locked in each other's arms. And with this thought, Percy bowed his head until his lips touched Anita's.

"There's magic in a kiss"—so sings the poet, and truer words were never spoken.

The pressure was returned, and Anita's arms tightened around the young man's neck. For a moment Abbot was in heaven—twas the first kiss that had ever passed between them.

But not even love is a specific against suffering, and the young couple were disagreeably reminded of their perilous situation. Breathing became more and more difficult. The earth surrounding them seemed glowing with heat. Perspiration streamed from every pore. Each breath drawn was one of absolute agony. And then—all was a blank.

They had yielded to the terrible strain—they had swooned.

How long this lasted, they never knew. Luis was the first to recover his senses. All was intensely dark—"a gloom that could be seen and felt." The air was close and hot, and every breath seemed like inhaling some noxious liquid. He endeavored to shout, but his voice was like that of a strangling person. Then he groped forward, and shaking Percy, succeeded in arousing him and Anita, who lay tight clasped in each other's arms.

"Rouse up, man!" hoarsely muttered de Sylva. "We are buried alive—the air is almost exhausted—unless we can dig through, we are doomed!"

Abbot seemed confused and bewildered, but then his brain cleared and he remembered all that had occurred.

"To work, then—for her sake!" he gasped, as he crept forward and tore at the hard, dry earth with his naked hands. "But—which is the right direction?"

Which, indeed? Who could answer? But to give way to despair meant certain death. They must have fresh air or die. And with this thought uppermost, yet breathing silent prayers that their efforts might be directed aright, the two men tore down the dirt before them, tramping it under foot, unheeding the sharp stones that lacerated their fingers. They were working for life.

The air seemed to grow thicker and more foul, until they could scarcely breathe. They seemed to be sweating blood at every pore. Yet they never paused—a moment's rest might be a life.

There was no sound from Ali a now. She did not reply when they called to her. Abbot groaned bitterly, but did not quit his work, though he pictured her dying—lying, and he unable to aid her. Oh, it was horrible!

A faint, gasping cry from Luis—but not one of joy. A sound of utter despair, a sound that told he had lost all hope.

"God help us! I've struck the solid rock!" he gasped, and then dropped at Abbot's feet, his courage gone.

For a moment Percy faltered. It seemed like fighting against fate. Why struggle to protract the inevitable—why not die, since die he must, in the arms of his loved one?

But his manhood urged him on to redoubled exertions. He tore at the earth like a madman. Then one handful clung to his fingers—it was wet—what did it mean? He shook it off and clawed frantically at the hole he had made. And then—joy! The sticky sand gave way before his hand, and as he drew back a puff of cool, deliciously sweet air followed! He had fought his way to the outer world!

For a moment he swallowed great draughts of the blessed, life-giving air, then groped back and lifting Anita in his arms, held her face up in the draught, beseeching her in frenzied accents to live—to live for him. He was little better than a madman; but he had undergone enough to make him such, during that terrible night.

The air within the den was rapidly growing more bearable, and Luis gave signs of recovery, and soon arose at Abbot's call. Anita, too, gave a faint sigh and began to breathe more freely, while her cheek grew warmer beneath Percy's passionate kisses. Then she murmured his name and clung closer to him—their warm breath mingled—their lips met and clung together as though they would never separate. That was the young hunter's reward for his desperate struggle when all seemed lost.

The reaction came, and the trio sat before the air-hole, faint, utterly exhausted. All seemed dark without, and they knew it was not yet day. They marveled that the night had not long since passed over. It seemed as though their imprisonment had lasted an age.

As they regained their strength and courage, the trio consulted in low, guarded tones. They had no means of knowing whether the Cayugas—provided any had escaped the double peril with life—had departed, or were still lingering near. They listened, but all was still without.

"After all," muttered Luis, gloomily, "it can matter little to us. They could only kill us, and that would be better than being lost in the desert, unarmed, without food or means of procuring any. We would starve to death."

"We would not lack for food—you forget how many buffalo and deer must have been killed leaping down here. It is water that I fear the most. My throat is so parched that I can hardly speak. And you, poor darling, what must you suffer?" added Abbot, sorrowfully.

"I am thirsty, but I can bear it better than the fear of falling into the hands of that dreadful savage. It makes my flesh creep to think of his ugly looks! Let's wait until sure that they have all left," murmured Anita.

"I saw the old beast—and that was the hardest of my trials—the knowledge that I could do nothing to rid you of my company. I hope the dog has been roasted alive!"

Anita ventured a little hug at these words, and was immediately repaid with interest, and the darkness kindly concealed more than one deeply flushed face as a little report followed the reluctant parting of their lips. Ah, after all, being buried alive was not so terrible—when one believes escape is possible, and is blessed with the company of one's beloved.

Finally Luis, who had not so much to distract his thoughts as the others, declared that he could endure it no longer—that he was almost crazed with thirst. And he rapidly enlarged the hole, until it was large enough to give passage to his body. Repeatedly cautioned by Abbot, he emerged, and peered keenly around. An impressive spectacle met his gaze in the gray light of dawn, but nowhere could he detect the presence of a living form. Even then he marveled at the coolness of the air. The traces of such an extensive fire should have lingered longer than that—in heat, if nothing more. But then a low, glad cry broke from his lips as his hand rested in a hollow filled with water! And then he knew. The blessed rain!

Anita and Abbot came forth and joined him, and ten minutes later were wondering how the want of a little water could produce such acute suffering.

Making Anita re-enter the den, the young men carefully examined the barranca, and then, scaling the rocks, peered out over the dead, blackened plain. Not a living object was visible. They were alone in the desert!

Yet even this thought did not greatly subdue their spirits. They had made such a wonderful escape from death that it did not seem possible they could be reserved for a more lingering though no less certain doom. They would yet escape from the desert—never fear!

It was anything but an agreeable scene that the trio gazed upon, as they stood before the den that had so nearly proven their grave. Hundreds upon hundreds of dead bodies lay in the barranca, filling it from side to side for full twenty feet in depth. The fire had singed most of the hair and hide off of these, and the heavy rain-drops had beaten off the charred flesh, leaving the bloody, half-cooked meat visible in blotches. The mass was steaming freely; the rain could not cool all that animal heat. And with the rest, scattered along the rocks were the corpses of many a Cayuga who had escaped the animals only to fall victims to the fire.

"It is horrible—beyond anything I ever dreamed possible!" murmured Anita, shuddering. "It makes me sick—let's leave this frightful place!"

"We will soon, darling," replied Abbot. "But we must not forget what lies before us. We may be days and even weeks trying to find our way out of this desert. To start without due preparation would be suicide."

"Our preparations will be very slight," faintly smiled Anita.

"Not so. First we must see to securing a supply of this water before the sun comes out and evaporates it. Then there is food—but that lies before us. The only difficulty will be to make a choice."

"Food—eat that!" faltered Anita.

"We must," quietly replied Percy. "We must eat that, or starve. We have no weapons—not even a knife, unless we can find one upon some of the dead Indians. We will have to eat this meat, and that without any further cooking. You must remember where we are, Anita, and continue to act like the brave, true-hearted woman you are. God knows we will have discouragement enough, without raising any among ourselves."

"Forgive me, Percy—I will try and be sensible. What is good enough for you, darling, is good enough for me."

Luis was climbing over the rocks, to search the dead Cayugas for weapons, and so failed to see the delicious bit of—What? Something awful, of course, but it's ill telling tales out of school.

Luis found several knives, but no other weapons that could be of service, unless it was one or two of the clumsy stone hatchets. And Anita, to prove how repentant she was, ate a generous slice of roasted buffalo-meat—and then asked for more! Like a singed cat, the meat was better than it looked.

It was nearly noon before they succeeded in finding a couple of large leather flasks that would hold water. These had been protected by lying beneath several animals, and had not been injured by the fire. With a good deal of patience, these were filled from the little pools, and then, with a good supply of roasted meat slung over their shoulders, the trio emerged from the barranca and faced their long, weary journey. But it was destined to be interrupted at the very outset. An exclamation from Luis caused Anita and Percy to glance up.

Far away—almost directly before them, a moving body was visible. A few moments' scouting resolved what they were—horsemen. But who were they friends or enemies?

"We must not run any risks—back to the barranca!" cried Abbot, as he crouched low down and retreated.

"Perhaps 'tis those dreadful men—the Red

Hawks!" faltered Anita, as they scrambled down the rocks.

This was the thought that was uppermost in the minds of each. Anita concealed herself in the den, Luis and Abbot anxiously watched the party from the escarpment, taking good care not to be seen. As they drew nearer, it was evident that the majority, if not all, were white men. It must be the Red Hawks, after the Cayugas, to avenge their slaughtered comrades and their destroyed town. And thus the party wound around the barranca unharmed. It was the band of Man-hunters, led by Walter Dugrand!

CHAPTER XIX.

OLD BULL'S-EYE AS A LOVER.

DOWN—down! through what seemed countless miles of empty space—an aerial flight that seemed never-ending. Then a heavy shock—a mad plunging onward over an irregular surface that appeared to be heaving and tossing like the waves of the ocean—then a painful shock—a blank.

When Old Bull's-Eye returned to consciousness, he found the faithful Snow-squall standing over him, licking his face and neck, whimpering dolefully as though mourning over his dead master. But this changed to a joyful whicker, as the scout struggled to a sitting posture, and gazed wonderingly around him. What had happened?

"Ha! I remember now!" he muttered, as a low sigh drew his attention to the little form that lay partly in his arms. "Thank God you are alive, little one!" and he pressed his parched lips to the upturned face, as Carmela unclosed her eyes.

The fire was no longer visible. The sky was clouded, and seemed threatening rain. The darkness was intense. Eyesight availed them little, and they could only guess at the method of their escape from what seemed inevitable death.

Weak and trembling, completely exhausted by the fearful sufferings they had undergone—as much of mind as of body—Carmela and Old Bull's-Eye made no attempt to arise, content in the knowledge that their lives had been preserved and that they were still together.

His arms tightened around her lithe, yielding form, his head bowed until their cheeks touched each other, their breath mingling, yielding to a delicious languor that neither of them cared to break.

"You are mine, little one!" softly breathed Old Bull's-Eye.

"Yours, forever—if you wish—you have conquered me," Carmela replied, in low, languid accents.

Their lips met—all else was forgotten. Such moments are like a smiling oasis in the dreary desert of life.

Then the rain came down, in heavy, blinding sheets. Love, under a shower-bath, is apt to cool down, and so it was with our friends. Old Bull's-Eye unwound his arms long enough to see that his powder-horn was safe, and placed it where there was no danger of its getting wet. The cool rain was very refreshing to their jaded, scorched persons, and served in a measure to quench their thirst. And thus the remainder of the night passed.

With the day-dawn came a knowledge of the wonderful escape they had made, and Old Bull's-Eye, wild and eventful as had been his life for years past, could scarcely believe his eyes.

That immense area lying between the Rio Gila and the Colorado river resembles in many respects that tract between the famous Cross-Timber and the Rocky Mountains, or the Llano Estacado, but in nothing so much as its rising by steps, so to speak. The traveler journeying toward the North-west meets at every hundred or hundred and twenty-five miles with a ridge of high hills extending as far as the eye can reach upon each hand. Scaling this, he naturally anticipates a corresponding descent upon the opposite side, but, in most instances, on reaching the summit he finds another broad, level expanse, stretching out beyond the range of human vision.

The mad race from the prairie fire had led Old Bull's-Eye a little south of east. The herd of animals had plunged headlong over one of these ridges, down upon the rocks, more than a hundred feet below. They had been crushed to death by thousands as the mighty stream poured over, trampling and crushing down those that preceded them, until the mass of quivering, mangled carcasses came up to within twenty feet of the upper prairie. The brutes had tumbled and rolled over until a slope ended two hundred feet out from the ridge, over which the majority of the *estampados* plunged to continue their flight beyond.

This was the descent that Snow-squall had made in safety, finally stumbling at the base and casting its riders to the scored and beaten prairie. The fire had swept up to the ledge, then died out for want of fuel.

"It don't seem possible that we could have come down there, and escaped with life!" exclaimed Carmela.

"There was never another horse that could have done it. Had I not ought to be a very proud man, with my little one and noble old Snow-squall?"

"But are you?" and Carmela shot a quick glance up into the bronzed face, with a blushing shyness that, until now, had been utterly unknown to her.

Old Bull's-Eye's reply was entirely satisfactory, of course, else Snow-squall would not have whickered so approvingly, as he lifted his head from cropping the scanty grass-blades.

"Am I awake, little one?" said the scout, laughingly, at length. "I am almost afraid to speak or to touch you, for fear it will awaken me from a dream. To think that I—a rough, ugly old man—"

"Hush!" and Carmela clapped her little brown paw over the scout's bearded lips. "You belong to me now, and no one shall slander my property. You are not old—you are not ugly—but you are a man, true to the very core! My life has been a rough one, and I am almost as much man as woman. But in you I have found my master. Such as I am, I am wholly yours. The debt of gratitude, if any, is owing you."

"You are in earnest—you will be my wife, little one?"

"Yours, now and forever, my king!"

Ah! well, love is as powerful in the desert as elsewhere, and can find an abiding-place in the heart that beats under a buck-skin shirt or Indian-dressed tunic, as well as beneath fine broadcloth and silken bodice.

It seems that love, hunger and thirst can exist at one and the same time, for ten minutes later the newly-pledged lovers were busily employed; Old Bull's-Eye kindling a fire, while Carmela, riding Snow-squall, went in quest of water. They were both successful, though it was a difficult task kindling a fire with such damp material. Then, side by side, they discussed love and antelope-steaks together.

Their surroundings were peculiar enough. The immense mass of bodies piled against the

perpendicular ridge. The brown prairie behind them, dotted thickly with prostrate animals, alive, but helpless. Spurred on by the fire, they had sunk, completely exhausted, the moment they were beyond its power, and now lay in strange juxtaposition. Here lay stretched out a huge jaguar, its once-beautiful hide scorched and blistered. Beside it was an antelope, their feet fairly touching. Wolves, panthers, wild horses, buffalo and elk were lying in every direction, unable to arise, completely exhausted, many of whom must die as they lay, from the effects of their terrible race.

"What course do you mean to follow now, Old—" began Carmela, but paused with a ludicrous air of confusion.

"I'm not ashamed of the name, pet," laughed Old Bull's-Eye, "for 'twas gained honorably. But I guess you had better call me by my real name. I was christened Abel."

"I was thinking of Chiquita, and wondering whether she escaped that terrible fire," added Carmela.

"That is what I must find out. If she is living, I must meet her face to face. And—little one, you said that you did not believe she was your mother. Pray God that your suspicions may prove true—that she is nothing to you!"

"I will—if you wish it," said Carmela, simply. "But why?"

"Because—you may as well know it now, as hereafter. Little one, I fear that this Chiquita is my wife!"

Old Bull's-Eye bowed his head and moodily picked at the ground. Carmela stared at him in open mouthed astonishment. But then she cried, sharply:

"If so, then I hope and pray that the fire burned her up!"

"Hush, pet—you may be speaking of your own mother. This is why I say I must find her. If she is your mother, and my wife, as I fear, then you—Well, little one, instead of a husband, you will have found a father."

"I don't understand—you can't be my father. What do you mean?" asked Carmela, slowly.

"Let it pass, now, pet. We will believe that all will come out right in the end. I don't feel like telling my story now—it's long and an unpleasant one, though you shall hear it some time. But you see now that I must not give up until I find this woman, or learn that she is dead, for from her alone—now that this Juan de Sylva, or Antonio Barillo, is dead—can we learn the truth. And until I learn different I'm going to believe that you are the child Walter Dugrand is searching for!"

Carmela seemed willing enough that this should be so. She had never known a father in her life, and however pleasant such a relation might be, she did not want to find one in Old Bull's-Eye. In her heart she knew that she could love him far better as a husband.

Snow-squall seemed quite recovered, and mounting him, Old Bull's-Eye rode in and out among the scattered animals, and finally found a young mustang that had regained its feet and was cropping the dampened grass greedily. It was an easy matter to secure it, and shifting saddle and bridle, Carmela was soon mounted upon its back. Though this was the first time human being had ever crossed its back, the mustang only winced slightly; the frightful race had tamed it most effectually.

Old Bull's-Eye, while examining the pile of carcasses, to see if it was possible to climb up to the upper prairie, with horses, made a joyous discovery. His trusty rifle was just peeping from beneath a dead buffalo, and extracting it, the scout found the weapon but little the worse for wear.

Provided with water and meat, the couple rode along the natural wall for several miles, finally finding a narrow trail that led up to the plain. A little tough climbing carried them up. The prairie, black as ink, stretched out before them as far as the eye could reach. There was no trail, but Old Bull's-Eye easily decided upon the course he must follow, and fixing the points well in his mind, they rode briskly forward, the young mustang behaving splendidly.

On, hour after hour, then a broad trail lay before them. Old Bull's-Eye dismounted, and closely inspected the tracks. A little exclamation drew Carmela to his side.

"Friends have passed by here, and that within the last two hours!" he said, gladly, looking up.

"How can you tell? I see that some of the horses were shot, but may it not have been the Red Hawks? I feel sure that they will follow after the Indians, as soon as they find out what has happened at the nest?"

"You see this?" and Old Bull's-Eye pointed out a peculiarly shaped track upon the dampened ashes. "I owned that horse until I found Snow-squall. Then I gave it to a friend, Murph, Toole. He was riding it three or four days ago, so I know that, since he passed here, the others are the men following Dugrand. If we can only overtake them! Come, let's try. With them we can clean out the Cayugas and rescue their captives."

Mounting again, the scouts passed rapidly along the fresh trail, Old Bull's-Eye repeating the story told him by his trapper friend, about Walter Dugrand. His language was no longer that of a rough, flatterer borderer. While with Carmela he cast off the mouth mask he had worn so long, showing himself for what he really was, a well-bred, educated man.

"Look yonder!" suddenly exclaimed Carmela, extending her arm. "What are they? Is not that a woman, with them?"

Old Bull's-Eye, who had been regarding his pleasing comrade far more intently than the trail, now noticed a little group of human beings, far ahead, evidently dismounted in the desert.

"Well, soon see—there are only three of them," he said, urging Snow-squall forward, closely followed by Carmela.

There was no cover behind which the three wanderers could take shelter, and though they had plainly discovered the horsemen, they stood still, awaiting the result. But then, with a glad cry, one of them sprang forward, waving his arms like a madman.

"Perry Abbot, by all that's holy!" cried the scout, as he recognized the man, and soon they were grasping hands.

It was indeed Anita, Perry and Luis, who, as soon as the party of supposed

three men keeping pace on foot, they hastened along the trail. The barranca was soon reached, and while the others rode around the ravine, Old Bull's-Eye crossed over and after a little search found the trail left by the Cayugas. The ashes lay several inches deep over the surface, and, having been thoroughly moistened by the rain, which had ceased shortly before the savages had resumed their retreat, received and retained perfect impressions of every foot. And among them, the scout found one that he felt assured was that of Chiquita—long, slender, and high-arched.

The two trails came together in a short time, and it was evident that the Man hunters had been rapidly overhauling the cannibals. The sun was not more than an hour high when Old Bull's-Eye abruptly paused and held up his hand in warning. Halting, the party listened intently. The faint sound of distant firing came to their ears. There could be only one solution.

The Man-hunters had overtaken their prey. Old Bull's-Eye lifted Anita from the saddle and leaped upon Snow-squall's back, exclaiming:

"You follow on after—I'm going to have a hand in the fun!" and away he galloped, like a madman.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 255.)

Injun Dick:

OR,
THE DEATH SHOT OF SHASTA.

BY ALBERT W. AIKEN,
AUTHOR OF "OVERLAND KIT," "KENTUCKY
THE SPORT," "ROCKY MOUNTAIN BOB,"
"WOLF DEMON," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XLVII.

TWO PAIR.
CHEROKEE looked at the old man for a moment, as if for the purpose of seeing if he was perfectly in earnest. There was no doubt about the matter; Ugly was not joking.

"It seems to me," the long-haired shanty said, "that offer is like the handle of a pump, all on one side."

"Why, you're sure to win," Ugly protested. "You always win."

"But you've got a sure thing, anyway."

"Well, I ought to have something for her; you, yourself, admit that."

"But you are sure that the girl will be satisfied?" Cherokee asked.

"I know she will be, and if she ain't, why, the whole thing is off, and you can have your money back; you needn't pay it until you know."

"It's a go, then!" decided Cherokee. "Here's the papers;" and the old man quickly drew a pack of well worn cards from his pocket.

Cherokee glanced at the cards a little suspiciously. Old Joe understood the meaning of the glances.

"Oh, it's all honest! I give you my word that the cards are all right."

Cherokee quietly took the cards and examined them; then, apparently satisfied, he shuffled them a little, and inquired:

"How is it to be, old man, a little draw, or a single hand?"

Old Joe reflected for a few minutes, and then resolved to stake all upon a single chance.

"Just a single hand, and the best show wins."

"We'll cut for deal, of course," said Cherokee, giving the cards a few more dextrous shuffles.

"You ought to allow me to deal, I think," Old Ugly suggested, coaxingly.

"Not by a jug-full!" was Cherokee's reply. "You've got the whole butt-end of the bargain already. There's your cards. Now, cut 'em. If you had any money to lose, I'd lay you an even bet that I'll win the deal."

"I'm broke," the old gambler confessed, with a sigh. "If you'll trust, I'll go you an even twenty on the turn, and you can take it out of the thousand."

"Make it five hundred instead of twenty, and it's a bargain."

"Five hundred?"

The temptation was too strong for the old man to resist.

"All right; five hundred even that I win the deal."

"Will you cut first?"

"No, you."

A turn of the wrist and Cherokee displayed the queen of spades.

A hollow groan came from old Ugly's lips. He did not believe that he could beat the queen.

"How's that for high, old man?" demanded Cherokee. "I'll go you a thousand to five hundred that you won't beat that."

Not even these tempting odds could induce old Ugly to invest.

"Oh, you have Satan's luck!" the desperate old gambler protested.

"Try yours, old man," said Cherokee, coolly.

Ugly's cut was a tray of hearts.

Cherokee laughed and Ugly swore.

"Now, partner!" the old fellow exclaimed, impressively, after his fit of passion was over, "play fair with me; no ringing in a cold deck, you know."

"Square as a die, old man, for ducats!" and Cherokee's trembling fingers dealt off the cards.

With trembling and with eager hands old Joe grabbed the painted pieces of pasteboard. Cherokee watched his face as he gathered up the cards, and soon saw from the expression that Ugly had got a good hand.

Then the long-haired sharp took up his own cards, but whether he held four aces or nary pair, would have puzzled a conjuror to have told, for it was not written on his face.

"Well," said Cherokee, inquiringly.

"I think that I've got you!" Ugly decided, trembling in every limb with excitement.

"Maybe so. I'm tolerably strong, though," and Cherokee betrayed no anxiety.

"What have you got?"

"Two pair."

"Aha!" shouted Ugly in glee. "I've got three of a kind—three ten spots!" And in great joy the old man laid down the magic three.

"Mine are two pair of Jacks," Cherokee remarked, placidly, and he laid down the four Jacks by the side of the three tens.

Ugly howled in despair when he understood that Cherokee had played upon him the well-worn joke of calling four of a kind two pair.

"I owe you five hundred dollars and you owe me your daughter, Elinore," and Cherokee called the stakes.

"You'll find her in the shanty," Ugly replied, still gazing blankly at the cards. "Tell her that I say that I am willing."

Cherokee rose to his feet.

"I reckon that this is a forlorn hope, old man, but I'll try it."

The long-haired sharp then strode away to the door of the shanty, leaving Ugly still gazing blankly upon the cards that had undone him, although he had come out of the game five hundred dollars richer. But what was that to a man who had expected to make a thousand and keep his daughter, too, as a bait for some other love-sick individual?

Cherokee knocked at the shanty door and when Elinore's voice bade him enter, walked in.

The girl was seated by the table, her head reclining upon her hand.

Cherokee removed his hat, closed the door behind him, and stood motionless, gazing upon the girl.

As often as he had seen the tall and slender maiden never had she appeared so pretty as now.

"You have won?" she asked.

Cherokee was astonished.

"You knew your father's design?"

"Yes."

"And you are willing to abide by the result of chance?"

"Do you claim me?"

Cherokee took a sudden start forward, knelt by the girl's chair, and placed his strong arm around her slender waist.

"Give me a single sign that you are willing to go with me, and I will claim you against all the world!" he exclaimed, passionately.

A moment she gazed upon the earnest, upturned face of the son of fortune, her dark eyelashes half veiling the kindling eyes beneath.

"I have fought against liking you," she murmured, slowly, "but fate is stronger than I, and wills it otherwise. Do you know who and what my father is? He is a criminal from justice. The president of a bank, he betrayed his trust; first squandered the funds intrusted to his care; then, when he found that detection was certain, he fled like a thief in the night. Remember that at any time the officers of the law may seize upon him, and while he lives I cannot desert him."

"I honor a spirit like that!" and Cherokee spoke softly. "I, too, on my part, confess that I liked you from the moment my eyes first fell upon you. Like you, I resisted the impulse to love. I did not think myself worthy the love of any pure girl. I am a desperate, hunted man, skulking through the world under an assumed name. Bitter wrongs have I to redress, bitter foes to punish."

"Why not seek forgetfulness elsewhere?" she said, gently, bending down and touching his broad forehead with her soft lips; "let my love make you forget the world's wrongs—forget revenge and all cruel passion."

Like one in a dream the iron-hearted Cherokee yielded to the soft influence of the most charming passion that earth doth know.

"Be it so," he said; "only one blow more, and then peace and rest."

CHAPTER XLVIII.

PLAYING 'POSSUM.

ONLY once more!

How many times that has been said in this vale of tears!

"Once more, and then I stop."

Many a mortal has comforted a doubting heart with this assurance, and, nine times out of ten, what fatal consequences have followed!

"One more blow!" cried the long-haired Cherokee, as he parted from the lily-like Elinore. "One more blow—the last, and then peace and rest."

With a lighter heart than he had carried in his bosom for many a long day, Cherokee left the wing-damn shanty.

Old Ugly was anxiously awaiting the result of the interview.

"Well—well!" cried the old man, nervously. "It's all right!"

Ugly rubbed his skinny palms together in a glow of satisfaction. "I knew that she would be pleased at the idea."

Cherokee smiled. He understood that the old man was lying.

"And the money, partner?" asked Ugly, eagerly.

"Come in town to-night and you shall have it."

Old Joe looked disappointed; it was plain that he hungered to finger the gold-dust at once.

"Why wait till night?" he grumbled. "What difference does it make if you give me the money now?"

"None at all, old sport," Cherokee replied, pleasantly; "but I don't want round with a small sized fortune in my pockets."

Ugly nodded; the explanation appeared reasonable to him.

"Suppose you make it this afternoon instead of to-night?" he suggested.

"No, no!" and Cherokee spoke decidedly; "you can't have it before night. There will be plenty of time for you to lose it all before twelve o'clock."

Ugly shook his head with an air of great wisdom.

"Oh, no," he said. "I'm not going to gamble with the money. I'm going to buy a share in a good paying mine. This is a big stake, and I'm not going to risk it."

Again Cherokee smiled; he fully understood the strength of a gambler's resolution. One look at the painted pasteboards and then the wild delirium would set in.

"Just you keep to that," the doubting Cherokee said, as he turned away.

"You'll be at the Occidental by dark?"

"Yes, if I live."

"If you die before dark, I'll call it square," Ugly shouted out after Cherokee.

That gentleman, striding along toward Chinabur, merely waved his hand and smiled.

Ugly watched him until he disappeared around the bend in the road; then, chuckling to himself in delight, old Joe went into the shanty.

Cherokee walked briskly on, strange thoughts in his mind.

Soon the thoughts translated themselves into words.

"It is of no use to keep up the fight longer," he muttered, communing with himself, as men who are of a solitary nature are apt to do. "Blood enough has been shed. One man cannot keep back the hosts of civilization, no matter how strong his hatred, or how great his skill. Let me quit the game and in another country begin a new life. I am sick of this land. No matter where I go, the bloody work seems to follow me. I'll go somewhere new where murder is a crime, and not even self-defense can excuse the taking of life. I'll just settle this one little account, and after that I'll close the book forever. Whoever pleases may work the Chinabur lode. It was madness for me to attempt to fight, single-handed, against mankind. Civilization is like the Hindoo car of sacrifice; clear the track or be crushed beneath the wheels!"

Cherokee was pacing onward with rapid strides, but as caution had become like a second nature to him, even while the muttered thoughts came from his lips, his eyes were keeping a wary watch upon the thicket that skirted the road. Not that he suspected danger,

ger, but that long habit had taught him to look for a foe in every bush.

And now, as he strode rapidly along the lonely road, his well-trained eyes warned him of danger, although the most searching glance could not have detected that there was a mortal near.

No human figure met the keen eyes, yet he was sure that within a little clump of timber, fifty paces or so along the road, a man was lying concealed.

A mother bird, frightened from her nest, was fluttering amid the tree-tops, and this simple circumstance convinced Cherokee that danger was at hand.

The bloody avenger, whose hand was against all men, knew full well that no friend waited for him in ambush.

Upon the instant he halted.

Too late, apparently, for a little puff of smoke rose in the bush, and the hum of a ball sounded in the air.

Up went the hands of Cherokee, convulsively, and he staggered and fell to his knees. With a desperate effort he drew a Derringer from his coat pocket; but, as if the effort had cost him dear, he rolled over on his side in the dust.

Then from the thicket, from whence the shot had been fired, rose a great shout of victory.

Forth into the road sprang the Mexican, Velarde.

"Caramba!" he cried, in glee, thrusting the yet smoking pistol into his belt. "I've finished the job at the first trial! Now for his dust!"

But as the assassin ran toward the prostrate man a wonderful change took place.

The dead man came suddenly to life; the hand that grasped the Derringer was raised, and with an unerring aim sped a ball straight to the heart of the Mexican.

With a wild, convulsive shriek the assassin fell. For a moment he writhed and groaned and struggled, biting the dust in his agony, and then, as life departed, became statue-like, still.

Cherokee had risen to his feet. His device had succeeded; he had tricked the Mexican to his death. But he did not advance to the stricken man. He drew a revolver from his belt, drew back the hammer, and leveled the weapon at the little clump of timber whence the Mexican had come.

It was plain that Cherokee suspected the assassin was not alone.

"Step out!" he said, sternly.

And at the word, out into the road came the bumder, Joe Bowers!

With a placid smile, the redoubtable Mr. Bowers confronted the menacing muzzle of the leveled revolver. He had extended his hands above his head, clear proof that he intended to make no defense.

"You did that bully!" Bowers exclaimed, in a tone of great admiration. "I never see'd any cuss popped off in better style. He thought he had you for sure, too. I reckon that you played that 'lone hand' all that it was worth."

"Got any prayers to say?" Cherokee asked, grimly.

"Reckon that I don't need to blow my Gospel horn just now, old pard," the bumder said, confidently. "I reckon that you won't plug the man that rang in a cold deal for you, the other night, at the Occidental."

"You are one of Brown's gang?"

"Ko-rect; but I jest foller him 'to serve my turn upon him, not for love and duty; as that noble galoot, Iago, remarks," Bowers said, unblushingly.

Cherokee hesitated for a moment, then finally lowered the revolver.

"Git!" he said, laconically.

"You bet!" Mr. Bowers replied, with equal brevity.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 245.)

ALIDA BARRETT,

THE SEWING-GIRL;

OR,
THE DOOR IN THE HEART.

BY MRS. E. F. ELLET,
AUTHOR OF "MADELINE'S MARRIAGE," "THE
BEAUTIFUL FORGER," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XL.

THE END THAT WAS.

THAT same evening Leon Burke had a long interview with his father.

Little more had passed between the married pair on the subject of the discovery so unexpectedly brought about. Mrs. Burke had kept her room, really ill from the effects of her painful excitement, and yet uncertain how her husband had taken the disclosure she had been compelled to make.

He now knew that Archibald Lovel was her former husband, divorced by her caprice, without any proper cause, and without fault on his part, except inability to surround her with the luxuries she craved, and to place her on a pinnacle as the queen of fashion.

What regard had she shown for the sanctity of the marriage tie for the sacred claim of him she had vowed to love and cherish to her life's end!

She had taken advantage of the shameful facility the laws of her State afforded; she had cast off her allegiance, had severed herself from her husband, even abandoning her child, and had ruthlessly deceived her new suitor, intent on sharing the wealth he could offer!

When her repudiated husband had achieved wealth, far surpassing that of Mr. Burke, and when the fortunes of the latter seemed precarious, had she not applied to the divorced one, hoping to learn the secret of his uniform luck, and thereby build up her private fortune?

Had she not received him at the banker's house, by stealth, as it were? Had she not taken him apart for a private conversation, and when discovered by her husband, had she not shielded the stranger from the blow aimed by maddening jealousy, even at the imminent risk of her own life?

These were bitter and humiliating thoughts to Stanley Burke, and he felt his heart grow hard toward the woman on whom he had lavished so much love, to be repaid with deceit and treachery.

He did not suspect her of cherishing a passion for the husband of her youth. He did not imagine she had forgotten her marriage vows to himself. But he deemed her wholly heartless, cold, scheming and treacherous. He knew beyond a doubt that she had never loved him.

Had the disclosures chanced a year sooner, or even a few months, Stanley Burke, with his horror of divorce and divorced women, would have separated himself forever from his wife. He would have settled on her a sufficiency to keep her from want, and would never again have looked upon her face.

But the late occurrences had taught him self-distrust; had humbled his pride in the dust.

Laura knew how deeply he had sinned to obtain the riches she had longed for. Discovery of what he had done would bring greater disgrace upon the family than her early fault; for did not the law sanction that? Yet she had never reproached him!

She had not taunted him in the hour of her humiliation with what he had done; nor bidden him measure his crimes with her more excusable dereliction. She had not defied him; on the contrary, she had taken all blame to herself. He could not deal harshly with one who had been so merciful to himself.

Yet the door in his heart was closed by the knowledge of her coldness, ambition and avarice. It would take time to soften the anguish of the blow. Meanwhile, he would do all in his power to give her peace. He would find her child, whom he would restore to her mother, and provide for her wants.

He had a hastily arranged plan, as soon as this was done, and his own safety secured by Leon's sacrifice, of leaving the country for a time. But he said nothing to his son.

Together they proceeded the next day to the address given by Gideon Drake. A messenger had been sent by Miss Le Brun for some of his clothes; so that they learned he was in—street, at the lodgings of his daughter; though not that anything had happened to him.

They went on to the place where they expected to find him.

There was an unusual bustle and crowd before the door; and they learned, on asking what was the matter, that two criminals had been arrested, charged with attempt to murder; and that their victim's deposition had just been taken in due form. Both Jim Kelly and his "pal," Wilmont, had been led away to the Tombs.

The gentlemen ascended the stairs. Just outside the door Leon recognized Mr. Lovel, and pointed him out to his father. When Lovel, with a smile, grasped his hand, he could not avoid introducing him.

The two husbands of the same woman stood face to face!

At a glance Stanley Burke saw that the man before him was a thorough gentleman. His noble form and features, the frank, kindly expression, the intellectual power blended with gentleness visible in his face, prepossessed him in his favor in spite of prejudices.

Neither had time to say a word. The doctor came out, followed by another of the medical profession and several of the neighbors.

Burke and his son were yet ignorant of the name of the wounded man. They heard the doctor say, "No hope," without suspicion that they had any interest in the matter. The next instant they entered the room.

Charlotte Le Brun was seated by the bed on which her father lay, dying of his wound. She was very pale. Her hair was turned back from her broad forehead, and fell over her neck in neglected waves. She was wiping the death-dew from Gideon's forehead.

Burke went close to the bed.

"Is this you, Gideon Drake," he asked, in a low voice.

"It is the same, governor, but I have not long to stay. Jim has done for me this time."

The words were jerked out with effort amid gaspings for breath.

The banker stooped to whisper in his ear: "Then you will do an act of justice, Gideon, and return me the papers you took?"

The dying man looked at him, not understanding.

"The papers you brought me back were stolen from my desk the next hour. And your daughter—if this is your daughter—offered to sell them to my son."

"Charlotte?" the pale lips opened to say. "Is this true?"

"It is true, father! I promised to restore them—on conditions."

"They are worthless to you—without Hammond's evidence! You could do nothing with them!"

"You see, young lady," whispered the banker, "though they are of vital importance to me, as my possession of them deprives Hammond of the power to injure me, you could not use them against me unless in concert with him. I see, by your conscious face, that you were the person who took them from my desk. Be satisfied with the misery you have already brought on me and my family."

The girl bowed her head.

"Let me have them! You shall be richly rewarded."

Without speaking a word, Charlotte rose from her seat. The imploring eyes of the dying man met her own. They seemed to plead for the act of justice that might help his sin-laden soul to depart in peace.

She went into the small inner room, and presently returned with the package in her hand. This she put into the banker's hands.

With a whispered expression of thanks, Burke turned away. Leon followed him. He gave not a single glance to Charlotte. She resumed her seat by her father's bed.

Lovel approached the dying man. His first inquiry was prompted by the benevolent solicitude of the Christian for the suffering.

"Can I do nothing for you?" he asked. "I can send you the best medical aid."

"Too late!" faintly breathed the wounded man.

Leon Burke returned.

His father's request, he said, was that Gideon Drake would restore the papers concerning Miss Barrett.

"They are in my valise, Charlotte," panted her father. The valise had been brought from his lodgings, and was close by the head of the bed on which he lay.

"Those papers," interrupted Mr. Lovel, "belong to me."

"They shall be restored to you," returned Leon, "the instant I receive them. You have assuredly the best right."

Miss Le Brun stooped her head to listen for Gideon's directions.

She took the key he wore attached to his watch-chain, unlocked the valise, and handed the parcel of papers to Mr. Lovel.

He thanked her, and after another offer of assistance, giving her his card to send to him in case of need, withdrew.

"God will bless you for these acts of mercy, Miss Le Brun," whispered Leon to her.

"Are you satisfied?" she asked.

"Certainly I am."

"Then stay no longer. You can see my father is insensible. He will never speak again."

"Send me word if I can be of service to you, Charlotte. Will you not?"

"You can do nothing for me. I entreat you to leave me. I will never ask another favor."

Leon cast one look on the expiring man. His face already wore the ashen hue of death, but his breathing was still audible.

The next moment Leon had passed out of the room. And before the next ten minutes had elapsed, the spirit of Gideon Drake had gone to its last account.

At the request of Stanley Burke, Alida was brought to his house for an interview with her mother. He was not present, but he saw the maiden before she departed. His greeting and congratulations were cordial and heartfelt.

Leon saw her too; not only on that occasion, but on several others. Once in particular, when, at Clara Burke's entreaty, the fair girl consented to officiate as first among her bridesmaids. Leon was first groomsman; and the happiness of attending her fell to his lot.

It was then that hope reentered his heart. The young girl was too artless to conceal the impression he had made upon her affections; and the two, somehow, contrived to come to an understanding satisfactory to both.

Clara was a lovely bride. She sailed for Europe soon after with her husband, who may yet become her presumptive of the earldom.

Alida, by her own and her father's desire, returned to school, and prosecuted her studies with diligence. In two years she will be emancipated. Then Leon Burke hopes that she will reward his faithful attachment.

Her father has purchased a home on

THE TEA IS ALWAYS LATE.
A Husband's Complaint.

BY JOE JOY, JR.

I cannot tell why it should be—
I can't see why it's so—
I somehow fall to understand—
I'd really like to know—
I wish that I could comprehend—
Won't anybody state
Just why it is that every night
My tea is always late?

My wife she promised at the start
To love me and obey,
And all things tokened happiness
From that sweet marriage-day.
But something in those marriage vows,
Of meaning very great,
I'm sure must have been overlooked—
The tea is always late.

I have to meet a friend at six—
Or go onto the mall;
Perhaps I've got to go to lodge—
Perhaps to make a sale.
I am expected at the store,
The buyer cannot wait—
But there my sorry luck comes in—
The tea is always late.

I've growled till all the windows shook,
And all the doors were jarred,
I've stamped till all the window-glass
Fell rattling in the yard;
I've vowed to take my meals down-town,
No matter what the rate,
But nothing seems to change the rule—
The tea is always late.

I move my wife with my complaints,
I turn the servants out;
I say my evening meal at last
I'll learn to do without.
I wait till to-morrow comes
To be more fortunate,
But everything turns out the same—
The tea is always late.

If I should ever wed again
I would fill up the flaw,
And make postponement of the tea
A breach in marriage law.
But, since I can't reverse the rule,
I've given up to fate;
I sit me down dejectedly
And take a nap, and wait.

The Snow Hunters:
OR,
WINTER IN THE WOODS.BY C. DUNNING CLARK,
AUTHOR OF "YOUNG SEAL-HUNTER," "IN THE
WILDERNESS," "CAMP AND CANOE,"
"ROD AND RIFLE," ETC., ETC.

VI.—Boiling a Tunnel.

For two days after the punishment of Bill Becker, and the addition of Indian Alf to the party, very little was done, for a heavy snow fell which made hunting impossible. It was not so much the quantity of snow which fell but a heavy wind was blowing, and for nearly forty-eight hours you could hardly see ten feet from the door. Luckily enough they had frowled in abundance, and therefore could afford to laugh at the storm outside. Sitting before the glowing fire they feasted upon the savory ribs of the wappiti and listened to the tales of Dave Blodgett. This man, in his adventurous life, had seen much of peril, and had shared in dangers almost beyond belief. He had starved with a party on the alkali flats of the West, and been "snowed in" among the Sierras; had canoed it upon the waters from the mouth of the St. Lawrence to the Gulf of California; had fought with the desperate Indians of all tribes over this broad land, and had dropped game before his deadly rifle upon nearly every State in the Union and every division of Canada. Such a man must have laid up great stores of knowledge, and through these stormy days the party never thought of becoming weary with listening to the stories of his wild adventure.

"Well, boys," said the guide, "seem we ar' snowed in, I reckon I'll hev to tell you about a trip I took one time up on the Red River of the North. I had two companions, boys, that knowed the kentry like a book, an' had seen nigh ez much of it ez I had, an' thet ain't sayin' a little, I allow. Jim Johnson was one an' Ned Fobes the other. We'd bin trappin' an' had b'it up quite a cache, but we had to keep mighty clust on account of the Crees. Them Plain Crees ar' p'izen, now mind I tell ye. A lot of hungry, lazy, wicked cusses, thet don't think no more of a man's life than you would of snuffin' out a candle. I've foun' 'em in every shape, an' I know wher of I speak."

"We had a mighty nice winter, and the beaver seemed to walk into our traps of the own accord. We talkated on makin' our pile that winter, an' it seemed likely we might. We'd made our camp in a canon among the mountains, a place hard to git at, an' thet we staid nights. We b'it a cabin clust to the rocks, and trained some mountain vines to run over it in such a way that a stranger would hardly know the cabin war thar."

"The night I speak of I didn't like the look of the sky. It wasn't cold, you understand, but the sky looked like lead, an' I knowed we war goin' to hev snow, an' I told the boys so. But they laughed it off, an' I sed no more, an' arter we'd smoked our pipes out three or four times, we laid down in our blankets an' slept like logs."

"I war the furst thet woke in the mornin', an' when I tried to push open the door it stuck, somehow."

"This door is bulged some way, Jim," I sez. "Come an' give us a lift, will ye?"

"Jim come an' set his shoulder against the door, an' turned pale when it didn't budge. Then he ran to the window, an' could see the white snow piled up high above the window, how high he could not tell."

"Snowed in!" "Boys, thet meant biznis. Thar we war, in a cabin in the midst of a deep canon, an' with hardly food enuff to last a month. It war an awful thought thet we three, who only wantid to make an honest livin' an' then die like men, should be cooped up in this hole to die."

"I'm bound to see whether this snow is over the roof," I sez. They lifted me up an' I clipped away the bark with my knife, an' of you will believe it, the snow war over the roof! It had drifted, an' the canon war full, an' we five hundred feet from the open kentry—where we could hev got along well enough—war penned up in a livin' grave."

"Jim Johnson sot down and thought about it. He war a noble feller, an' one thet never give up when thar was a way out'n the scrape. I could see by his face that he didn't perpose to give up—not ef he know'd it."

"Dave, he sez, 'how fur is it out of this durned canon?'" "Five hundred feet mebbe. I reckon we ar' dished, old man."

"Don't give it up yet, sez Jim. 'Ef the snow wa'n't so durned light I'd laugh at it, but this yer tumbles in too easy. How much wood hev we got?'"

"Wood enuff to last all winter. I only wish we hed ez much grub."

"Hev we got a weel's grub?" "Yes; a month's, sartain."

"Then take it easy. Let's play a game of seven-up. I kin beat the boss at the picters."

"Under the circumstances, it war rather cool in him to ask me to play keards, and the look of horror in my face made him laugh."

"Don't look like you was goin' to sink inter the grave, Dave," he sez. "Only let this snow settle an' I'll git you out of this. An' when I say that, I mean biznis. We ar' all right, I tell ye. Anyway, I'll bet ten beaver-pelts we ar' out'n this in a week."

"Do you think we ar' goin' ter hev a thaw?"

"Nixy."

"Then, how d'ye mean ter git out?"

"Never you mind. Git them picters an' let us hev some fun."

"I don't think I ever played a hand at old fledge when the picters interested me less; but, somehow, Jim's calm face infected me, an' I felt better. We didn't do much fur two days but play keards, an' on the third mornin' Jim pushed the door an' got a handful of snow. It were quite wet, an' Jim looked pleased."

"What ar' you goin' ter do?" I sez.

"I'm goin' ter make a tunnel."

"Why, Jim, sez I 'yer lame on thet, yer awful lame. This yer tunnel hev got ter be five hundred feet long. Now, what ar' ye goin' ter do with the snow?"

"Looks like I couldn't fotch it, eh? You build up a roaring fire an' put out all the kittles. I'm goin' ter bile my way out."

"I minded him, not thet I seed'd his little game yet. I got the fire roarin', an' he took the kittles out—the snow had melted away from the door so that he could open it—and he war diggin' at his tunnel, an' throwin' the snow in on the floor. We scooped it up an' threw it inter the kittles, an' when they war full, Jim took the hot water out an' threw it on the snow in front of him, an' every kittles-full dug a mighty big hole in the snow."

"Looks like we mout fotch her, Dave," says Jim. "What d'ye think now?"

"Won't she cave in? I sez, lookin' up at the roof of his tunnel."

"He didn't answer, but, after he had dug the tunnel about ten feet long, he took out the water and threw it on the roof, where it formed a sort of cake, so that it did not fall in worth a cent."

"Hooray, Jim!" I sez. "You'll fotch it this time!"

"The fust day he dug a hundred feet, an' had a nice tunnel two feet wide an' six feet high, an' when we went into it in the mornin' the roof war hard ez ice, an' didn't show the fust sign of caving in. We worked like heroes now, an' that day we did two hundred feet. We couldn't go wrong, fur the canon wa'n't more'n twenty feet wide."

"Jim war proud of his tunnel, an' I ain't fully satisfied he didn't git up nights to look at it. Not thet we slept all night, but we took spells of sleep while the other two worked. One thing troubled me: s'pose this wa'n't a drift in the canon—s'pose the snow were that deep on a level. On the fifth day we had dug over five hundred feet, an' no sign of daylight yet. Jim still kept whistling at his work."

"How long ar' you goin' ter keep this up?" I says.

"While the wood lasts, boyee. I thought you told me it war five hundred feet to daylight!"

"I thought it war nigh about that."

"I don't keer of it's eight; I'm bound to tunnel out. I seem to feel that we'll succeed. For—hooray—hip, hip, hip—hooray!"

"Sure enough, we saw daylight ahead, an' we know'd thet we war nigh liberty. Ned went back fur the rifles an' traps, an' Jim made the snow fly afore him. Five minits arter we stood in the open air, free men, after seven days spent under the snow. What's the time, Square? Ten o'clock, eh! Blanket-time with me."

And the party lay down to rest by the gleaming fire.

A Game of Cards.

BY LUCILLE HOLLIS.

"EUCHERED!" exclaimed Maurice Sands, as his partner, Miss Cornelia Hungerford—called Neale, for short, by her few intimate friends—threw a trump upon their opponents' last trick. He gathered up the cards, saying:

"We have scored nine. One more point and we are victors, and it is your deal," this last in his *vis-a-vis*.

The lady puts out her hand for them.

"Why, Miss Hungerford, are you ill?" Maurice asks.

"Oh, no! but—" she feels that she is frightfully pale—"the room is close." She draws a sort of sighing breath, as if really oppressed by the sultry atmosphere of the August night, as experienced within the brilliantly-lighted room, then, with an effort, is her fascinating self again, and makes a laughing remark to Willis Cleveland as she tosses the cards about.

She does not pale again, even when she looks at her hand, knowing that, in all probability, this deal decides her fate. Her own cards tell her nothing; but Mr. Sands' voice does, almost instantly, with a triumphant ring in it that would have been intensified had he known the decision that this game of cards controlled.

"You've done magnificently, partner! See what you have given me," shows up his hand—the two bowers and the ace—"our last point!"

She bows, and holds her white hands across the table to him in congratulation, as placidly as if she was not realizing, with great heart-throbs of anguish, that she has put forever into the past, honor, and love, and happiness. And though of her own will, and only in mental agreement with herself has Miss Hungerford done this—staked her destiny upon a game of cards—it never occurs to her to do aught but accept as inevitable the fate she has challenged. She is no coward, if rash, passionate, and unwise. She has never been known to abandon a purpose short of its fulfillment, nor to flinch in the execution of tasks however difficult, or foolhardy, or mad. The termination of a game of cards has pictured her future. She sees it, loathes it, accepts it, and turns to hear Miss Morse's congratulations with a light born not of victory, but of death-like resolve, in her great, cloudy, black eyes.

"My compliments, Miss Hungerford," Cleveland joins in. "You have won the stakes for championship. Allow me the honor, Maurice."

Mr. Sands has lifted a vine of myrtle twisted with a few stary, white phloxes. Cleveland takes it from him, and rising, places it gracefully, with a half caressing motion it seems to Miss Morse—who loves Willis, and chafes under the galling consciousness that she loves him hopelessly—upon Cornelia Hungerford's stylishly arranged braids of blue-black hair.

"I crown you champion eucher-player of

Cliff Cottage," he says, dropping his gaze down upon her handsome, creamy, brunette face.

Miss Hungerford rises, haughtily.

"Thank you; but allow me to remind you that my name can only be used as that in connection with Mr. Sands." Then turning to that gentleman: "It is fearfully oppressive here; will you give me your arm to the veranda?"

They go out together, slowly—there seems a challenge in all Miss Hungerford does to-night—into the yellow August moonlight, and warm, damp, fragrant air, and along the broad balcony to a wide side-flight of steps lying in a rippleless flood of sheen. Here Miss Hungerford withdraws her hand from her companion's arm and leans, tall and stately, against a shaft of railing, coolly surveying Maurice, who stands in awkward silence. How she hates him—no, not that; he is not enough her equal to be worthy such passion; but she regards him with merciless contempt, this rich, loud-styled, unintelligent, almost illiterate man, who has asked her to be his second wife, and whose second wife she means to be.

Presently she says, calmly: "I thank you for allowing me my own time wherein to frame an answer to your flattering offer; but I might have spared you any impatience by saying 'yes' at first, as I say it now." Few men but Maurice Sands would have failed to catch the sarcasm flavoring Miss Hungerford's speech.

"I am blessed—" he begins awkwardly, without the least attempt at affectionate demonstration—Miss Hungerford has a look as if she would not allow it—"I—I—" here he breaks down.

Cornelia makes no effort to help him make love to her, but stands silent, with mocking lines and lights about her mouth and in her eyes; so he commences again, drawing a great, glittering diamond-drop from his fourth finger, and holding it toward his betrothed:

"Will you let me place this upon your hand—and—and—I may feel sure that it is the—"

Miss Hungerford comes to the rescue this time: "You may feel sure that I shall wear it as the visible seal of a bond that shall be ratified at your own good pleasure."

"Thank you. It shall be very soon, but we'll talk of that to-morrow."

"Very well. Take me back."

Mrs. Cleveland meets them at the door. "I was just coming for you, Neale; it is too damp to stay outside, and Fred and Willis are both asking for you to sing."

"Then I must resign Mr. Sands to your tender mercies, Anabel. A sweet reprieve for him since he is to endure mine for life."

So, she tells her friend that this engagement has come about; and, at the piano, her diamond-decked finger flashes the intelligence to the others of Cliff Cottage circle. Estella Morse rejoices; Mr. Cleveland looks over to his wife—entertaining Maurice—and shrugs his shoulders cynically; his brother, leaning low over Cornelia as she concludes her vocal entertainment and dashes into a grand fantasia, whispers:

"I suppose I ought to congratulate you, but I shall not! You do not think as much of the man you are going to marry as you do of me! You feel only contempt for him; you honor me with your hate—though you know I worship you!"

Miss Hungerford replies with insulting coldness: "Spare yourself congratulations and the infliction of your conceit. You do yourself too high an honor in thinking I would waste any thing so exhaustive as hate upon you. As for your worship, do not waste anything so precious; it is not worth a thought to me!"

"Is it not?" he says, with a steely hardness in his low, intense voice. "Is it not? You shall learn better!"

She laughs such a mirthful, mocking laugh back at him, as she gets up from the piano, her face from him, and cries: "How flatteringly you all treat my music! Estella gone, Fred asleep, and you, Anabel, and Mr. Sands, looking like poppies—the combined result of sleepiness and heat, I presume. It is insufferably warm to-night."

Mr. Sands sends for his carriage, and presently the horses come round. Miss Hungerford accompanies him to the door and reluctantly gives him her hand. He grasps it firmly, jerks her toward him, saying: "I have the right," and kisses her, and goes down to his handsome equipage.

At that moment Willis Cleveland brushes past her, his hair wet with dew from the honeysuckles, a sneer curling his lips.

Miss Hungerford sees, and passes up the stairway with her face aflame, and in her own room kneels by her open casement and ripples the sultry summer gloom with short, quick breaths of anger and misery.

Now, when she feels the touch of that man's kiss upon her lips—lips whose very curved lines speak of the woman's inborn pride—lips that have never given favors to any man but Alymer Du Puy—lips that he has caressed scores of times, as sacred to him, alone, calling them all beautiful names that describe their carnation perfection—she feels cold chills of horror as she realizes how utterly, in her rashness, she has crucified womanly honor and the only soul-passion her heart can ever know. And that Willis Cleveland should know this, too, and taunt her with it! How she hates him! but not more than she hates herself!

There is a slight tap at the door. Instantly Miss Hungerford is walking toward it calmly; calmly she questions:

"Who is there?"

Willis Cleveland's voice answers, "It is I. Pardon me, Miss Hungerford, but I find slipped among my letters one for you. I quite forgot to hand it to you at tea."

Miss Hungerford sets the door ajar, and takes the letter, and shivers with it in her hand in the gloom, and as the flash of the lamplight falls upon it whitens to the lips; for it is from Du Puy. Steadily she opens it and reads:

"NEALE, DARLING NEALE: No doubt I have been a fool. But I cannot believe that I am not more to you than Willis Cleveland. At least, I must make one trial, even though you are down there with him, to save you to myself. Forgive I pray you my hard words—my silence—forget and forgive everything save that I worship you! My love! my life! I cannot live without you! Send me word when to live and love you."

"ALYMER DU PUY."

And if this letter had reached Miss Hungerford four hours sooner, she might have answered it as her whole nature dictates. Instead, she has madly staked her fate upon cards, and lost the lover to whom she has been too proud to write first, and for whose message she has waited vainly so many days.

Now that it is come, she is the promised wife of another man, and Miss Hungerford has never broken her word, will not break it now. So what avail to explain that Willis Cleveland had never been more to her than her dearest friend's brother, to exorcise her lover's jealousy, to deprecate her own rash pride and folly?

"The lady to whom Mr. Du Puy wrote to-day is the betrothed wife of Mr. Maurice Sands, of Castle Kyngre, Hildreth."

Those are the only lines that go in answer to Alymer Du Puy.

Miss Hungerford and Mr. Sands are to be married with the New Year. He is at his town house; she vibrates between Anabel's, on square, and her boarding-place upon a street near; meeting Willis occasionally, hating him as fiercely as ever, and trying to believe that he is half to blame for the misery she endures—the effect of her rashness. Willis and Maurice meet oftener—around town and at the club.

They play late one night, Maurice staking heavily and losing all. All the gentlemen have been drinking. Willis, especially, is flushed with wine and excitement. Perhaps that is how he comes to taunt his *vis-a-vis*.

"You ought to ask Miss Hungerford to come play for you."

"How dare you use her name here?" Sands cries, in a rage. "You have too much to say of her, and to her, at all times."

Willis laughs mockingly: "Oh! ho! that need not trouble you! She cares scarcely more for me than for you, and Heaven knows, she hates you badly enough!"

A spray of wine dashes across Cleveland's face. But New York is not the city in which to fight duels, and their friends hold them apart. The games go on, and Maurice yet loses.

Out in the cold gray dawn walks Willis. Another man follows him close, the owner of the fiery team who chafe by the curb. The man drops his hand heavily upon Willis's shoulder.

"Now swear to me that what you said in there was false!"

"It is not! Cornelia Hungerford loves but one man. She quarreled with him, and means to marry you because of her devilish pride!"

"And that man was—?"

"His name, you mean? Alymer Du Puy. Ask her if it is not so, and Cleveland walks away with a mocking laugh."

Sands springs to the carriage, snatches the reins from the drowsy servant, flings the whip at the fiery horses, and a minute later they are tearing along the square, carrying the debris of a carriage from which master and servant lie limp upon the stones. In an instant two men are bending over Maurice—one with whom he has just quarreled—one who had reached them just in time to hear their quarrel—and find him dead.

"Can you give me Miss Hungerford's address, Mr. Cleveland?" Alymer Du Puy asks, quite calmly, after ascertaining that fact.

Perhaps Willis understands in that instant of what little avail all that has happened will be to him. He gives the address.

Miss Hungerford comes down to her nine o'clock breakfast, after a sleepless night.

"A gentleman in the parlor to see you, Miss, and if ye please he says he's in a great hurry."

She turns back from the dining-room door, and enters the parlor, where Du Puy faces her. In a moment he is holding her hand, and asking:

"Neale, for God's sake, tell me the truth! Do you love me enough to marry me?"

"I am to marry another man! I have given my word!" She falters, turning away her head, and wondering whether she has strength and pride to keep her word, as she has always kept it heretofore.

"Neale," he says almost in a whisper, "suppose I tell you that you are absolved from that promise, forever! What then?"

Anabel coming in hurriedly to condole with her friend over the death of her betrothed, finds her being consoled in Alymer Du Puy's arms.

G. T.

BY EBBE E. REXFORD.

ROY TREMAINE, sauntering idly down the street one morning, saw something flashing in a jeweler's window which made him think of Helen Pierce, because its radiance was so pure.

Roy was Helen's lover, and her betrothed husband, and that will explain why so poetical a simile was suggested by the flashing of a pearl.

He stepped inside and asked to see the jewel whose glitter had attracted him.

It was a pearl, fashioned in the shape of an acorn, with a cup of gold. One of those rare pearls that have a radiance like moonlight, so pure and mellow in its light that it was suggestive of a lover's dreams on starlit nights of June. At least it suggested that to Roy. To those who were not lovers it might have failed to suggest anything so foolish and romantic.

"I've a good notion to buy it for Helen," he said, holding up the gem to see the sunshine filter through it.

While he was looking at it George Trent came in. Trent was not an especial friend of Roy's. He had tried to win the woman he had won. He knew that he ought to be magnanimous now, and forget all that had passed; he could afford to since Helen Pierce wore his ring upon her finger, but somehow he could not overcome an instinctive feeling of dislike for the man who had been his rival.

"A pretty little thing you have there," said Trent, coming up to the window. "I would buy it if I were in your place for a certain lady I wot of. Allow me to congratulate you, Tremaine. I believe I haven't seen you since the happy affair was decided."

Trent referred to Tremaine's engagement.

"Thank you," answered Roy, rather coldly. "I will take it," he said to the jeweler, and gave him the pearl to wrap up for him.

He was intending to call on Helen the next evening, and give her the pearl. It would be her twentieth birthday.

Rut the next forenoon he received a telegram from Boston. His presence was required there at once on a very important business matter.

He sat down by his desk and wrote a few words on a slip of paper, and wrapped it around the box containing the pearl. Inclosing this in another paper he wrote Helen Pierce's name on it and put it in his pocket.

"I am sorry I can not give it to her myself," he said, as he got ready for his trip to Boston. "I'll get some boy to take it up for me. She'll understand what it is meant for."

On his way to the train he called a boy and gave him the box to take to Helen. Little did he think of what he would have to suffer from that bit of concentrated moonlight.

Roy came back three days afterward. The first person he met was Trent.

"Ah, back again!" said that gentleman, shaking hands with him. "Miss Pierce told me that she thought you would be gone a week."

"You have been there, then?" said Roy, not very amiably. "She is well I suppose?"

"She was well this morning," answered Trent, smilingly. "I drove her down to the wharf, and saw her safely off."

"Off?" echoed Roy. "Where's she gone to?"

"To Charleston," answered Trent, with a rather triumphant smile. "I supposed you knew she was going. She's been talking of it for a long time."

"No, I didn't know," said Roy, who didn't fancy the idea of his old rival being so much better informed of his intended wife's plans than he was. "When is she coming back?"

"Can't say," answered Trent, pulling out his watch. As he did so, something on his watch-guard flashed in the sunshine. Roy glanced at it, and wondered if his eyes were playing him false. It was a pearl acorn, in a cup of gold, so exactly like the one he had sent to Helen that he could have sworn it was the same.

"Ah, you are admiring my little gift," Trent said, toying with the jewel. "I didn't suppose I was to be the happy recipient of it when you bought it, and I don't suppose you did."

"I should like to know how it came in your possession!" said Roy, excitedly. Trent's exultant ways stung him.

"I can show you a note that came with it, or part of a note rather," answered Trent, taking a scrap of paper from his pocket. "I wouldn't care to let you read all of it."

He held the paper up, and Roy read:

"I received this pretty little trifle yesterday. Knowing who sent it, I do not care to wear it. The sender was once my friend, but is so no longer."

"That is all I shall let you read, except the name," laughed Trent, and covered the paper with his hand, with the exception of a narrow space at the bottom, on which a name was written.

That name was Helen Pierce.

"I must thank you for indirectly being the cause of my good fortune," laughed Trent, maliciously. "I suppose from what she said, there had been a lover's quarrel. It's an old saying 'That it's an ill wind that blows nobody good.' It proved true in this case."

"You are very much at fault in your suppositions," said Roy, frigidly. "There has been no lover's quarrel. If Miss Pierce chooses to present her dear friends with pearls and rubies she has a perfect right to do so. Good-morning," and bowing coldly to the man who was enjoying his chagrin, he left him.

Roy Tremaine was like a man in a dream for a week after that. He could not understand what it all meant. That Helen had sent his gift to his rival he knew from her own letter accompanying it. What she could possibly mean by her reference to the person who sent it he could not understand. He had given her no cause for offense.

Did she love Trent, after all?

As days went by, and no letter came from her, he began to believe that she did, and that one reason why she had gone away was to avoid him.